

# First confirmed sighting of pine marten on Anglesey in more than 30 years

September 26 2022

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Credit: Bangor University

A rare pine marten has been photographed on Anglesey. This is the first confirmed sighting on the island in over thirty years of intensive wildlife monitoring. A team of Bangor University researchers made the exciting discovery whilst undertaking research on the islands nationally important red squirrel population.

Dr. Simon Valle, Dr. Graeme Shannon and Dr. Craig Shuttleworth had established a network of cameras in different types of woodland across Anglesey to monitor local red squirrel abundance. The ground-breaking project is an attempt to better understand which woodland habitats are optimal for red squirrels and how changes to [forest management](#) may affect their numbers.

Trawling through over 15,000 images of red squirrels, [great tits](#) and other [forest birds](#) collected this spring, the researchers came across a sequence of three images of a pine marten pictured in the bright spring sunshine.

Dr. Graeme Shannon said, "After working my way through a few hundred great tit photos—seemingly the same individual hopping back and forth—I was thrilled to suddenly come across three clear images of a curious pine marten looking back at the camera. A species that until recently was extremely rare in Wales. An unexpected but very exciting discovery."

Pine martens were released near Bangor in the period 2018–20 as part of the "Gwynedd Pine Marten project" and scientists have very occasional photographic evidence of individuals in Faenol woodland near the Britannia railway bridge. There have also been anecdotal reports of animals close to Holyhead, fueling suspicion that perhaps an animal may have stowed away on an incoming ferry from Ireland where the species is abundant. In addition, 51 pine martens were released in Mid Wales in 2015–2017 to help boost numbers and some of these animals have been sighted more than 50km from the release site.

Pine martens are medium-sized predators weighing 1.5–2kg. They can climb trees well and have a diet that includes bird's eggs, [forest](#) fruits, tree berries, small rodents and occasionally red and gray squirrels. They live in very low numbers and are often very elusive, but recent research

has shown that they can play a critical role in controlling the invasive gray [squirrel](#).

Dr. Simon Valle said, "It's encouraging to see that even on an island with such low tree cover, local forests still hold the potential for witnessing the return of a charismatic species such as the pine marten. Maybe our forests are, or can be, much wilder than we often think."

Dr. Craig Shuttleworth would be interested in hearing from anyone who may have seen a [pine marten](#) on Anglesey. Anyone with any information can email [c.shuttleworth@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:c.shuttleworth@bangor.ac.uk)

**More information:** Further information about pine martens can be found at [pinemarten.net/](http://pinemarten.net/)

Provided by Bangor University

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