

The House Mouse (*Mus musculus*)

Introduction

The house mouse (*Mus musculus*) is a native rodent species in Great Britain. It is regarded as a common species, and is listed as being of 'least concern' by the IUCN Red List. Some individuals have been domesticated as pets, while others are used as laboratory mice which are advancing science throughout the world. This page has been set up to raise awareness and to increase our understanding of the distribution of the house mouse in Cumbria. We would like you to get involved in recording house mice in your neighbourhood!

Ecology

The house mouse is nocturnal, and frequently lives in a construction of underground tunnels, or within human houses, garages, barns, or sheds. They rarely inhabit woodland due to competition with other small mammals (PTES). It is their association with humans that has allowed them to spread throughout the world, occupying a range of our domestic buildings, and feasting upon our food supplies. House mice can have a varied diet, but frequently consume grain, fruit, and occasionally invertebrates. They will generally eat any form of human food where it is available. If food is scarce, mice can search an area as large as 200m², but when food is relatively common their range can be as small as 5m² (PTES). They can be commonly seen throughout the year especially in breeding seasons when numbers are high or during hibernation periods where they are more likely to enter our buildings and associated structures.

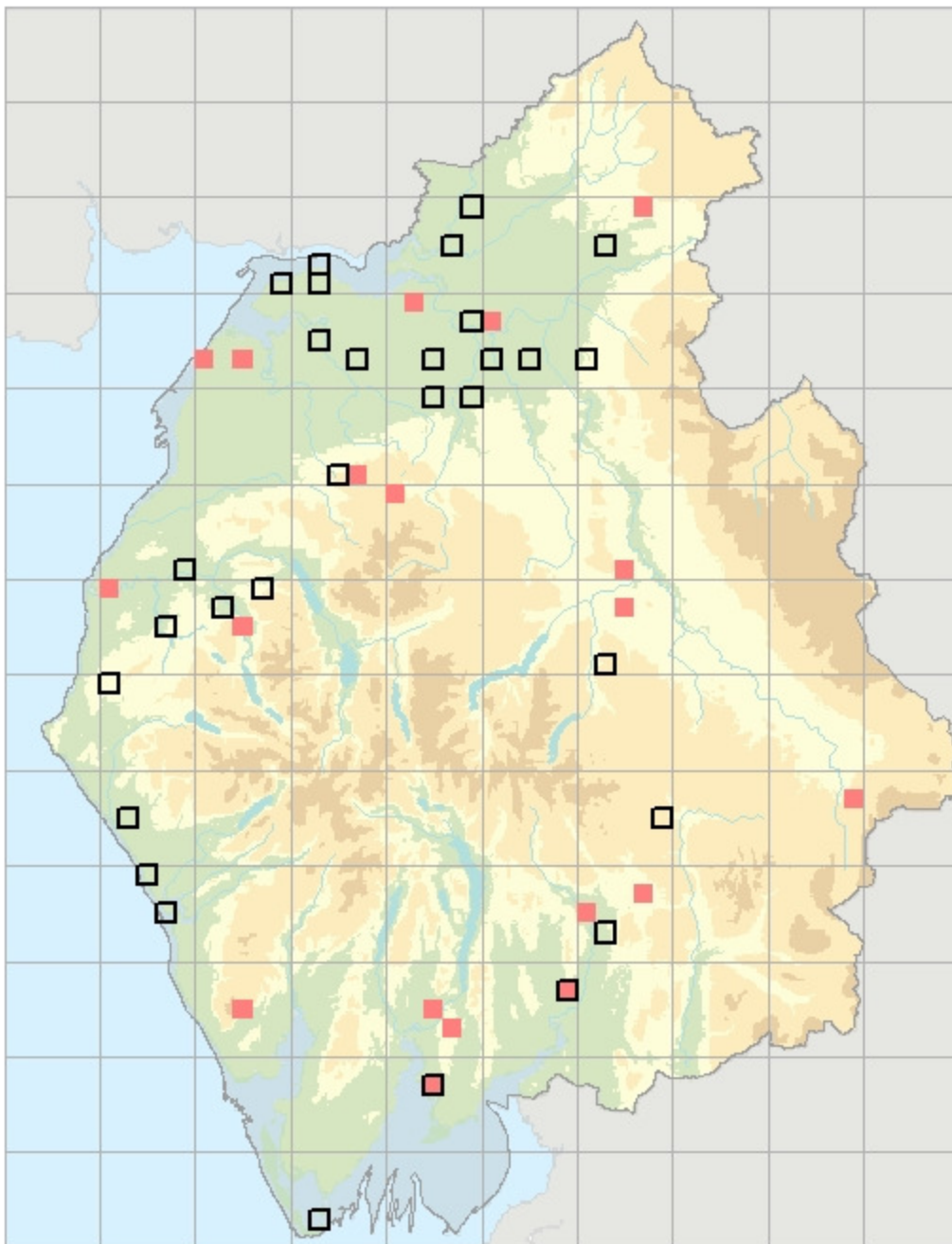
Males are territorial with one or two dominating in highly abundant areas. They can frequently fight to defend their territory and maintain their breeding partners. Females can have up to ten litters a year with approximately four to eight young (RSPB). They have a relatively short gestation period of 19 to 21 days, and the young are weaned for around two weeks. Typically a female produces approximately 40 young during her lifetime. The average lifespan of a house mouse is 18 weeks (British Wildlife Centre), but an individual can survive for up to 18 months in the wild. Overall, the British population is thought to have been stable for the last 25 years with the breeding population estimated to be 5,400,000 individuals (PTES).

Distribution Map

The map below shows the number of tetrads containing house mouse records before 2000 (black outlines) and after the year 2000 (pink filled squares). The map suggests that the records we have are largely from lowland areas, with a clear ring around the Lake District National Park and a clear avoidance of the Pennines. It could be that this is because of where recorders live or visit, and not because of where the house mouse is found.

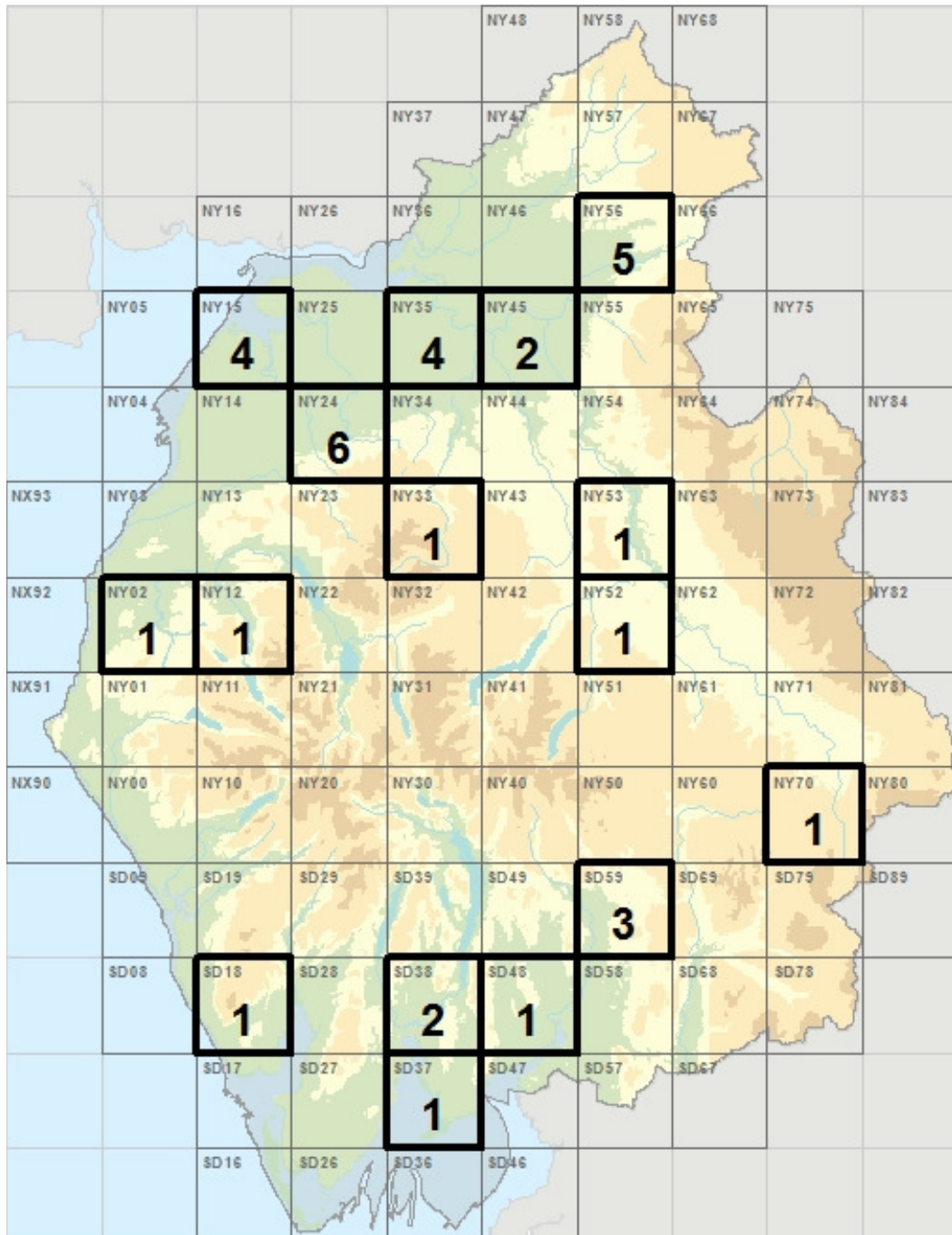
There are only 19 tetrads with data post 2000 and 30 tetrads with records before 2000. In total the CBDC database has 84 records of the house mouse in Cumbria. The majority (49) of these records were made before the year 2000 by 29 recorders (excluding some recorders whose identity is unknown). In contrast, 35 records were made after the year 2000 by 16 recorders. We hope that any records you submit will add

to this total and that this will provide us with a better understanding of the house mouse distribution within Cumbria.



Grey Square Challenge

The map below shows the hectads (black outlined squares) which have records after the year 2000. The number inside the square represents the number of house mouse records we have on the CBDC database. We hope to increase the number of house mouse records in these hectads, and also increase the number of hectads we have data for. Your records will add valuable information to this map which will help us to target appropriate areas to increase our understanding of the house mouse distribution.



How to identify the house mouse

Features of a house mouse:

- Dull brown-grey coloured fur.
- It has a length of up to 10cm.
- A long almost hairless tail which is often the same length as its body (up to 10cm). The tail tends to be thicker than other species.
- Small rounded ears that are more prominent than other species. They can be up to 1.cm long (British Wildlife Centre).
- A pointed snout

Submitting a house mouse record

To make a record valuable to us we need to know five main points:

- WHO spotted it?
- WHAT was it?
- WHERE was it? - (a grid reference and location name is preferred)
- WHEN was it spotted?
- HOW many were there?

All small mammal records submitted using this page or will be sent immediately to John Martin for verification until further notice. John is our Cumbria referee for mammals and will be happy to look at any evidence of house mice. He will also verify any mammal records submitted on iRecord.

It would be great if you could include a photograph or other piece of evidence with your record. Ideally, a clear photograph of the head, upperside of the body, and underneath (ventral side) would be useful for identification purposes, however any evidence you have would be highly appreciated.

Please use this form for **small mammal** records only. There is a general submissions form on the CBDC homepage <http://www.cbdc.org.uk/recording-wildlife/share-your-records/>. If you would prefer to email us your photos or videos please contact us on house.mouse.enquiries@gmail.com.

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Immediately put to use.

Send a Record to CBDC

If you only have one or two sightings to report and are not a regular recorder please complete the form below.

Date (All forms acceptable but recommend full dates [DD/MM/YYYY] if possible)

Site (Site name where appropriate e.g. Fingladdigg NNR)

Location (Additional location information e.g. Carpark)

Grid Ref (If relevant resolution e.g. NY 397560)

Species (Scientific) (The scientific name is preferred)

Species (Common) (Please make sure this is as clear as possible e.g. "Peacock" - Butterfly? Bird? Moth?)

Abundance (No. of individuals, e.g. 6 or many 'if no count given, 1 is assumed')

Type of Abundance (Juvéniles, adults, males, females)

Comments (Any extra details, e.g. feeding on nettles)


Recorder Name (Your Name)

Email (We may need to contact you with questions about your record.)

Telephone/Mobile (We may need to contact you with questions about your record.)

Upload Picture(s) (Send us your pictures, please upload multiples in .zip file)

No file chosen

I'm not a robot 

References

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<https://www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk/planyourvisit/animals/housemouse.html> [Accessed 03/08/2017].

Cumbria Wildlife Trust. Available at: <http://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/> [Accessed 03/08/2017]

Musser, G., Hutterer, R., Kryštufek, B., Yigit, N. & Mitsain, G. 2016. *Mus musculus*. (errata version published in 2017) The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016: e.T13972A115117618.

People's Trust for Endangered Species. 2017. Available at <https://ptes.org/get-informed/facts-figures/house-mouse/> [Accessed 03/08/2017].

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Available at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-and-wildlife-guides/a-z-of-a-wildlife-garden/atoz/h/housemouse.aspx> [Accessed on 03/08/2017].

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