

Wood Mouse

Apodemus sylvaticus

Mammal · Here all year · does not hibernate



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A slender, long-tailed mouse with sandy-brown fur, a clean white belly, very large ears and prominent dark eyes — altogether a more elegant animal than the house mouse it is often confused with, and it lacks that species' musty smell. Wood mice are probably the commonest wild mammal around Dumfries, found in woodland, hedgerow, gardens and rough ground, and they move into sheds and outbuildings as the weather turns.

BEHAVIOUR

Strictly nocturnal and a superb jumper and climber, the wood mouse forages for seeds, nuts, berries, buds and insects, and caches food in burrows and old birds' nests. It is one of very few mammals known to use portable landmarks — placing leaves or twigs to mark a route and moving them as it explores. When cornered it can shed the skin from the tip of its tail to escape, though the tail does not grow back.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Mice and rats (Muridae)
SIZE	Body 8–10 cm plus a 7–9.5 cm tail
UK STATUS	Common and widespread; not protected

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