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What does the garden dormouse need?

Since early May, 15 garden dormice in the Savelsbos woodland near Maastricht have been wearing collars fitted with small radio transmitters. In a study commissioned by the Dutch Mammal Society, Femke Warmer, an MSc student of Forestry and Nature Management, has been monitoring the animals closely.

‘The aim of the study is to get a fuller picture of where the garden dormice stay, what home range each individual has and what the habitat is there,’ Warmer explains. ‘At night I follow where they are active and what distances they

travel. We map out those places during the day. By linking these data, we obtain a picture of which habitat goes with which activity.’ With this research, the Dutch Mammal Society aims to figure out what is needed to better protect the garden dormouse, which is one of the most endangered mammals in the Netherlands. There are no more than 200 of them left in the Savelsbos and on the nearby Bemelerberg. Known in Dutch as the ‘acorn mouse’, this little creature belongs to a subgroup of rodents that hibernate in winter and are known as dormice. RK