

# PINE MARTENS BOUNCE BACK

The Two Moors  
Pine Marten Project



## Pine martens and wildlife management

Pine martens are a native medium-sized mustelid that are considered Critically Endangered in England and Wales. They are generalist omnivores that eat what is seasonally abundant and in doing so disperse seeds and regulate dominant species that may outcompete and predate rarer ones. Pine marten are slow breeders, solitary, territorial and live at low densities. They are well adapted to a woodland habitat, are excellent tree climbers and will utilise aerial cavities in veteran trees, root plates and squirrel dreys to rest and den. Amongst some of the greatest risks to recovering pine marten populations includes non-target exposure to lethal traps and poison. Here we provide guidance (adapted by those developed by Gloucester Wildlife Trust) for reducing those risks.

### Pine martens are a protected species

They are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Section 9 and Schedules 5 & 6. It is therefore a legal offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure or take a pine marten;
- destroy any structure or place which a pine marten uses for shelter or protection;
- disturb a pine marten while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;
- obstruct access to any structure or place which a pine marten uses for shelter or protection.

### Grey squirrel and small mammal control in pine marten landscapes

Pine martens are hyper mobile and have large territories. If you are in an area where pine martens are known to be present, assume pine martens may be using your land and consider the impact of pest control on them and other non-target species. It is the responsibility of the trapper to adhere to the law and avoid using lethal traps accessible to *any* protected species (including pine marten), and to take measures to avoid live trapping of pine marten.

Where pine martens are present:

- **Lethal traps with an entry larger than 38mm should not be used.** Lethal traps (e.g. spring and gas, including Goodnature™) may inadvertently capture and kill a pine marten. Exclusion tunnels cannot be fitted where the size range of the target species overlaps that of pine marten (e.g. rats/stoats/squirrels).
- **Only live capture traps (or shooting at baited stations) should be used to target species that overlap in size with pine martens.**
- **Drey poking should not be undertaken.** Pine martens often rest in squirrel dreys.
- **Traps should be checked twice a day.** Checking traps early-mid morning and late afternoon-early evening will allow any martens captured during the night and day to be released. This trapping regime aligns with best practise trapping methodology for grey squirrels where protected red squirrels are present. The trapper is responsible for the welfare of any animal caught. Live traps should be well covered to provide shelter & protection to captured

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animals and reduce stress e.g. through the use of vegetation and a waterproof material to shed rain and provide visual screening. Remote sensors on traps can be used where they have been shown to reliably work.

- **Multi-capture traps should not be used.** Multi-capture traps can greatly increase the stress of captured animals, particularly when there are two predators, a predator and prey, or competitor species caught in the same trap. This is highly likely to lead to injury and death of one or more caught animals whose welfare the trapper is responsible for.
- **Rodenticides should be avoided** and used only where absolutely necessary, and following the latest Code of Best Practice for rodenticide use as per [thinkwildlife.org/download/crru-uk-code-of-best-practice-2024/](https://thinkwildlife.org/download/crru-uk-code-of-best-practice-2024/).

In the case of accidental capture of a pine marten in a live trap, ensure that the door is secured open and that the trap is covered to enable the animal to leave in its own time. If one is accidentally captured in a live trap, efforts should be made to avoid a repeat trapping by e.g. relocating the trap in the first instance followed by a change of method (e.g. targeted shooting) if a pine marten is caught a second time. Please report any pine martens sightings using our contact information at the end of this document and by submitting to the VWT pine marten map. Photographic evidence and specific location information enables us to accurately monitor the spread and distribution of pine martens across the southwest. Any caught mink or grey squirrel must be humanely destroyed. It is illegal to release them.

## Pine martens and grey squirrels

A growing body of evidence from Scotland and Ireland suggest that the recovery of pine marten populations correlates with a decline in grey squirrel distribution and the recovery of some native red squirrel populations. It is hoped that the recovery of threatened predators such as the pine marten (and others e.g. goshawk) may, in combination with effective grey squirrel control provide a holistic approach to reducing invasive grey squirrel populations.

## The Two Moors pine marten project

The Two Moors project is reintroducing pine marten to Dartmoor and Exmoor and forms part of a national strategy to restore a healthy pine marten population across England and Wales. This work follows-on from translocations that have already taken place in mid-Wales (2015) and Forest of Dean (2019). Pine martens are a native species and have been an important component of our woodland ecosystems for thousands of years.

### Further guidance & information

- UK Forestry Standard technical note "Controlling grey squirrels in forests and woodlands in the UK"; [https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2019/12/ukfstn022\\_m7ldper.pdf](https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2019/12/ukfstn022_m7ldper.pdf)
- CRRU UK Code of Best Practise for rodenticide use; [thinkwildlife.org/download/crru-uk-code-of-best-practice-2024/](https://thinkwildlife.org/download/crru-uk-code-of-best-practice-2024/)
- Red Squirrel South West - <https://redsquirrelsouthwest.org.uk/>
- Exmoor Squirrel project - <https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/nature-and-landscape/nature-recovery/how-we-are-doing-more-for-nature/the-exmoor-squirrel-project>

### Contact us & report sightings

- Get in touch via [pinemartens@devonwildlifetrust.org](mailto:pinemartens@devonwildlifetrust.org) and find out more <https://twomoorspinemartens.org/>
- Submit your sighting to the UK pine marten map: <https://pinemartens.uk/national-pine-marten-monitoring-programme>



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England

