

## PINE MARTEN KITS BORN IN THE WILD IN WALES

In our previous update from our project partners, The Vincent Wildlife Trust, back in September 2015, we told you about the translocation of native pine martens from Scotland to Wales as part of Britain's first carnivore recovery scheme.

It's official, following the move pine marten kits have been born in Wales! And we're extremely happy to hear this news; these births are a significant moment in the conservation of pine martens as this native mammal carries the title of Britain's second rarest carnivore, after the wildcat.

At least three of the ten female pine martens brought to Wales from Scotland last autumn by The Vincent Wildlife Trust have given birth. Staff from the Trust's 'Pine Marten Recovery Project' placed remote cameras at a number of sites where they believed female martens were preparing to have young.

Further investigation has confirmed a total of at least five kits! Natile Buttriss, CEO of The Vincent Wildlife Trust, said:

"I am absolutely delighted. We have been waiting with bated breath for months to see if breeding would be successful."



*Pine marten kits in a den box in Wales, photo credit: Jenny MacPherson*

The Pine Marten Recovery Project aims to restore a viable pine marten population to Wales and England. We are one of the project's major partners, as well as the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and Woodland Trust, with support from Wildlife Vets International and Exeter University.

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*"THIS IS SUCH AMAZING NEWS, AND MAKES ALL THE HARD WORK BY THE VINCENT WILDLIFE TRUST TEAM AND PARTNERS WORTHWHILE."*

- SARAH BIRD, CHESTER ZOO'S BIODIVERSITY OFFICER

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Mike Townsend of the Woodland Trust added:

"Pine martens are not just an iconic woodland species, but also a key missing element in the woodland ecosystem. This recovery project demonstrates the importance of ensuring connectivity of good wildlife habitats across wide areas, so this beautiful and rare creature can thrive and hopefully spread more widely across the country."

In September twenty pine martens were taken from Forestry Commission Scotland land under licence from Scottish Natural Heritage and relocated to Wales where they were on the verge of extinction. The animals were released in woodland owned by Natural Resources Wales.



*Pine marten, photo credit: James A Moore*

This is a pilot project and the animals have been radio tracked daily by staff and local volunteers to monitor their movements and behaviour patterns. When some of the females' behaviour began to change it was a sign that a birth might be imminent.

A further twenty pine martens will be translocated from Scotland in the autumn and this should result in a self-sustaining population that over time will spread to other forests of Wales and across the border into England. Without this helping hand, it is likely that this native mammal would simply disappear from the Welsh landscape.

To find this blog online visit:

<https://www.actforwildlife.org.uk/conservation-news/pine-marten-kits-born-wild-wales/>