

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A PINE MARTEN

Last year we joined forces with The Vincent Wildlife Trust on their Pine Marten Recovery Project. So far, the project has gone from strength to strength with the most recent news from the project being the arrival of kits to some of the females that had been translocated.

These little snippets of information give us a rough idea of what the pine martens have been getting up to in their first year after arriving in Wales.

One marten in particular seemed to be easier to follow than the rest, mainly owing to her prominent personality. The Vincent Wildlife Trust named her Miss Piggy and we will be bringing you exclusive updates about Miss Piggy from the field. Josie Bridges, Pine Marten Project Field Assistant for The Vincent Wildlife Trust, tells us more about what Miss Piggy's life in Wales has looked like so far:



“Miss Piggy (PM07) arrived in Wales in October 2015, along with another female and a male. All three were driven from Scotland overnight and it is from this journey that PM07 received her very fitting name. The van transporting the martens regularly stops to offer the animals food and water, and whilst some of the animals can be very wary of people and will only eat once left alone, this was not the case with Miss Piggy!

“On arrival in Wales, Miss Piggy was released into a pen built by a team from Chester Zoo. Remote cameras in each pen monitor the behaviour of the martens to assess whether they are stressed and if they are eating regularly. Initially, most of the animals have a period where they hide in their pen's den box, only venturing out into the pen in search of food under cover of darkness. Miss Piggy had no such reservations and was out and about in her pen within a few hours hunting out any available food.

“After about six days, the doors to the pens are opened to allow the martens to roam free. The pens are left in situ to allow the animals to return after release for supplementary feeding and a safe shelter while they establish a territory. For some time Miss Piggy, unlike most of the other martens, regularly returned to her pen to sleep and to Hoover up any food left by project staff – her antics frequently captured on camera. She became well known for the ‘reverse egg wiggle’, deftly rolling an egg backwards!

“All the martens were radio tracked daily to check on their whereabouts – and this has continued until this month. The animals are now being recaptured and the radio collars removed. True to form Miss Piggy was captured having eaten everything in her trap. From this point on only remote cameras and scats (droppings) will tell us of her whereabouts as she settles into life in Wales. Next year she will be old enough to have kits – we keep our fingers crossed.”

If you want more detail about how Miss Piggy’s life in Wales is going, then head over to [The Vincent Wildlife Trust’s website here](#). Keep your eyes peeled as we follow Miss Piggy closely over the coming years and keep our fingers crossed that she joins the breeding population of pine martens in the years to come.

You can help us continue to protect the precious wildlife right here in the UK by making a donation to Act for Wildlife today. 100% of your money will go towards projects working to protect Britain’s rarest animals like the pine marten.

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