

DISTRIBUTION OF THE EDIBLE DORMOUSE IN RUSSIA

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Distribution of the edible dormouse (*Glis glis* L., 1766) in Russia is limited by spreading of broad-leaved and mixed broad-leaved-coniferous forests. Forests inhabited by the edible dormouse are characterized by the development of dense undergrowth and the presence of old hollow trees used for nests. The dormouse inhabits mostly forests with predomination of tree species of the family Fagaceae, in the largest part of the area it is various types of oakeries with maple and hazel undergrowth.

The Western boundary of the edible dormouse area in Russia goes along the boundary with the Baltic States, Byelorussia, Ukraine and Moldavia, the Eastern one goes mostly along the right bank of the Volga, the Northern boundary – from the coast of the Baltic sea across Pskov, Smolensk, Tula and Niznyi Novgorod Regions and the right bank of the river Volga in Tataria goes to the Volga (town Tetiushi). The Southern boundary goes from the boundary with Ukraine to the area among the rivers Volga and Dnepr, then along Penza Region to Volsk. The Caucasian plot is relatively isolated.

Within the boundaries of Russia the area of the species consists of enlarged area of distribution in central Russia with very low population density, represented by separate findings and two plots with continuous distribution and stable number of dormice.

The area near Europe of the dormouse habitation is composed in the North by mixed and broad-leaved forests of Pskov, Smolensk and Bryansk Regions and southerly by the broad-leaved forests of Kursk, Tula, Orel, Voronezh, Kaluga and Moscow Regions.

The largest Volga's plot of the dormice habitation is woodlands of mainly inundated oakeries and over flood-land terraces of the right banks of the rivers Volga and Oka their tributaries (the Pra, the Tzna, the Moksha, the Sura, the Tzivil, the Sviyaga) in Ryazan, Tambov, Niznyi Novgorod, and Ulianovsk Regions, Mordovia and Chuvashia. Southerly the edible dormouse inhabits the Zhiguli Mts, where has relatively high numbers (up to 10 animals per 100 trap nights), the most numerous in old lime-maple oakeries with dense hazel undergrowth. There are separate specimens of dormice on the left bank of the Volga in the Sokolyi Mts – the most Eastern point of the species habitation. The edible dormouse area is situated along the Volga to the river Medveditza (Saratov Region).

In the Caucasian plot the species has the highest population density (up to 30 mammals per ha). The dormice are widely distributed from Novorossisk along the Black sea coast and the Northern slope of Caucasian range. The mammals live here almost in all large forests and gardens from the Northern Caucasus steppes to the highest boundary of vegetation (2000 m) with maximal numbers in fruit gardens and beech forests with admixture of the oak and other species.

In many areas specific censuses of dormice were not carried and the population density is unknown. Moreover in some areas the researches have not been carried, so new findings and extension of supposed species area are possible.