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## Rising to the challenge



Thanks to everyone for your support during 2020. Despite adversity, positive progress has still been made by the UK's tree/woodland and wildlife sectors this year. Along with a renewed focus on and recognition of the importance of nature, and the many benefits it provides. Offering opportunity for us all to build on this together during 2021.



# Events in 2021

## Red Squirrel Appreciation Day – 21 January Twitterstorm 12:00-14:00

Join our [Twitterstorm](#) using the hashtag [#RedSquirrelAppreciationDay](#) to celebrate red squirrels and raise awareness of the need to conserve them. In 2020, many individuals, groups and organisations participated – thanks for being involved.

Last year's numerous hashtagged tweets, and likes and shares of the many different posts, meant our collective effort saw us successfully trending fifth in the UK at the height of activity. Helping to highlight red squirrels to a wider audience.

We hope the 2021 Twitterstorm will be just as popular. Please share the event with your networks and encourage as many as possible to get involved in this opportunity to highlight red squirrels early in 2021.

If you have any questions or wish to confirm your support, please email [info@squirrelaccord.uk](mailto:info@squirrelaccord.uk)

## Fertility control research update – 19 March Webinar 10:00-13:00

To mark the mid-point of our [grey squirrel fertility control research project](#), we are organising an online event to update progress. Join the Animal and Plant Health Agency team to find out about their work and the various research streams that make up the project.

Discover more about the oral contraceptive being developed, the species-specific delivery hopper being designed, and the modelling work being carried out to better understand the potential impact of fertility control on grey squirrel populations in the landscape.

Following the presentations there will be opportunity for you to ask the team any burning questions, which can be sent in when registering or asked during the event. Registration for the webinar will open early in 2021. For details, please keep an eye on future communications and the events page of our website... [www.squirrelaccord.uk/events](http://www.squirrelaccord.uk/events)



**Red Squirrel  
Appreciation Day  
Twitterstorm 2021**

Join us on 21 January 2021  
12:00-14:00 GMT

Tweet, like and share  
using the hashtag  
**#RedSquirrelAppreciationDay**

Feel free to use this image in communications to help promote the Twitterstorm.

## Red squirrel national strategies/plans

Scotland and Wales have existing red squirrel strategies that they continue to deliver. UKSA is supporting work on the following:

**England** is drafting its red squirrel action plan. A series of workshops will be organised in 2021 to consult with stakeholders.

**Northern Ireland** is currently developing their red squirrel strategy for the country. There will be a second consultation in 2021.

## UKSA YouTube channel



UK Squirrel Accord now has a YouTube channel. Watch the [grey squirrel bark stripping awareness short film](#) we recently launched and catch up on the webinars held this year with various experts.

Link to our channel: [UK Squirrel Accord - YouTube](#)

### Content:

- Bark stripping damage to trees – issues and solutions
- National Tree Week webinar
- Grey squirrel damage webinar
- Red squirrel conservation update

Do share the link and videos with your networks and supporters. If you have any suggestions for future webinars, please email us at [info@squirrelaccord.uk](mailto:info@squirrelaccord.uk) with your ideas. Thank you.

## Wildlife cameras

Thanks to funding from the Forestry Focused Future, Knowledge Transfer Grant Scheme for our [grey squirrel bark stripping awareness film](#), we have use of four wildlife cameras.

We plan to continue capturing video evidence of grey squirrel bark stripping and will be looking to position cameras in secure locations with a high probability of damage between April and July 2021.

We are also interested in capturing footage of red squirrels in action outside of the bark stripping months.

If you have any suggestions for good filming locations where the cameras will be safe, please email [info@squirrelaccord.uk](mailto:info@squirrelaccord.uk)



## Great Scottish Squirrel Survey

**Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels' second Great Scottish Squirrel Survey during Red Squirrel Awareness Week was a resounding success.**

Three times as many people took part this year as in 2019 and eight times more sightings were reported than in a normal week.

Dr Mel Tonkin, Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels Project Manager said: "We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to report a squirrel sighting during the survey. It's been inspiring to see more people than ever taking time to enjoy nature and be on the look-out for squirrels."

Find out more [here](#) and keep reporting your sightings during the year.



# Research on squirrel topics

## Modelling different grey squirrel management methods

UK Squirrel Accord is [funding research](#) into an oral contraceptive to reduce grey squirrel populations. To compliment this, the Animal and Plant Health Agency are also developing a model to compare management methods.

The first research paper on the modelling work has now been published: [A spatially explicit population model to compare management using culling and fertility control to reduce numbers of grey squirrels](#). Click on the title to gain free access to the paper before 23 January 2021.

The team compared culling and fertility control separately, and then a combination of short-term culling with multi-year fertility control. Results showed fertility control alone to be slower to reduce numbers but is highlighted by a previous study as a more publicly acceptable management method. One year of culling followed by ongoing fertility control was shown to more rapidly reduce or eradicate grey squirrel populations.

The modelling work is based on conservative estimates of the efficacy of the oral contraceptive and can be updated as [our research](#) evolves.

## UK attitudes to squirrels and management

Through involvement with the Red Squirrels United (RSU) programme, Forest Research conducted a survey comparing public attitudes to red squirrels and grey squirrel management between RSU red squirrel areas and the wider UK.

The following paper has been published and is freely available: [The red zone: Attitudes towards squirrels and their management where it matters most](#)

Analysis of survey responses showed a significant difference in the understanding of the relationships between red and grey squirrels by residents in RSU areas than those of the wider public – who are more likely to have little or no knowledge.

There was a greater desire from both residents in RSU areas and the wider public to see red squirrels rather than grey squirrels in parks, gardens, and the countryside. RSU participants were less keen to see grey squirrels in any environment and hold red squirrels in higher regard than elsewhere in the UK.

Raising awareness of the need for invasive species management is identified as key for conservation.

## Reporting squirrel sightings

Please do report your red and grey squirrel sightings across the UK. Here are some useful links to enable you to submit your sightings to support red squirrel conservation and protect tree health:

Scotland - [Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels](#)

Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland - [All-Ireland Squirrel and Pine Marten Survey](#)

Northern England - [Red Squirrels Northern England](#)

North Wales - [Red Squirrels Trust Wales](#)

Mid Wales - [Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership](#)

Local groups in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales - [Northern Red Squirrels](#)