



Get involved and share your events

RED SQUIRREL
AWARENESS WEEK

20 - 26 September 2021
www.squirrelaccord.uk/events

Join us for this year's Red Squirrel Awareness Week to celebrate the wonders of red squirrels and the conservation work taking place across the UK to secure their future.

Details about our UK Squirrel Accord webinar are on the next page along with other activities to get involved in. Let us know if you are holding any events/activities for Red Squirrel Awareness Week by emailing us at info@squirrelaccord.uk. We can help promote them on our events page www.squirrelaccord.uk/events and via social media.

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UKSA red squirrel webinar

Join the UK Squirrel Accord's red squirrel conservation update webinar for Red Squirrel Awareness Week; 22 September 2021, 10:00-12:00.

Catch up on the UK-wide situation from leading professionals working to protect and enhance red squirrel populations in Scotland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales. Our presenters are...

Dr Mel Tonkin - Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels
Katy Bell - Ulster Wildlife
Stephen Trotter - Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Dr Craig Shuttleworth - Red Squirrels Trust Wales

[Register in advance and share with your networks.](#)



Great Scottish Squirrel Survey

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels asks people across Scotland to go outdoors, explore nature and lookout for tufted ears and bushy tails for their Great Scottish Squirrel Survey during Red Squirrel Awareness Week.

Report your sightings of both red and grey squirrels to help provide a snapshot of Scotland's squirrel situation and contribute to conservation efforts.

Last year over 2100 people reported 3160 squirrel sightings in just one week. Help make this year even greater. [Record your sightings on the SSRS website.](#)



Fertility control research

This year's fieldwork has focused on further testing the species specificity of the feeding hopper that will ultimately contain the grey squirrel contraceptive.

Researchers are working with red squirrel community group volunteers in Northumberland to see if red squirrels can access the feeding hopper. Along with trials in Wales with The Gwynedd Pine Marten Project to see if pine martens can access the feeder.

We are coming to the end of the third year of the research programme and will decide which of the three oral contraceptive routes to take forward into years four and five. We will announce our findings and decisions during an update webinar this November. We appreciate any donations towards this important work: www.squirrelaccord.uk/donate - thank you!

Red squirrel volunteers

The Red Squirrel Survival Trust is still accepting nominations for the Volunteer of the Year Award and has several bios from volunteers on their website.

[Find out more and nominate an individual](#) for Volunteer of the Year that has dedicated their time and energy, and made a real difference to UK red squirrel conservation efforts. The closing date for submissions is 30 September 2021.

RSST also has a selection of stories from some of the UK's many amazing volunteers. Find out more about their roles and reasons for being involved in protecting red squirrels and safeguarding their future. Read about their work reintroducing red squirrels, conducting research, and managing and setting up red squirrel community groups. How could you get involved?

Helen Butler MBE, Wight Squirrel Project Manager, is working to share her vast experience.

Thirty years of research on the Isle of Wight's red squirrels are being turned into a report, with [part one](#) and [part two](#) now online.

Helen first started working with the island's red squirrels in 1991 when their numbers had dropped to concerningly low levels. Thanks to Helen and others the future of their red squirrels is now much healthier.

Our latest videos are on the [UK Squirrel Accord YouTube channel](#) – subscribe to receive notifications. [The Botstiber Institute for Wildlife Fertility Control](#) has released a fertility control short film. Our recent blog posts include one on radio tracking red squirrels for research.

Videos:

- [Grey squirrel fertility control research update](#)
- [Woodland invasives: grey squirrels 2021](#)
- [An overview of wildlife fertility control – BIWFC](#)

Blog posts:

- [Grey squirrel tree damage evidence](#)
- [Tracking red squirrels in the Highlands](#)

Please share this content with your networks to spread knowledge.

Woodland creation

Applications for the [England Woodland Creation Offer \(EWCO\)](#) opened on 09 June 2021, replacing the Woodland Carbon Fund.

Landowners, land managers and public bodies can apply for support from the Forestry Commission to create new woodland on land at least one hectare in size. Funding includes the use of natural colonisation.

The EWCO supports diversification with an allowance in any one proposal for up to 15% of species being untrials. This is aimed at reducing invasiveness, hybridisation and high levels of mortality. [Contact the EWCO mailbox](#) for any further information or queries.



Grey squirrel tree damage

Earlier this year we asked for visual evidence of grey squirrel bark stripping damage to trees. Thanks to all those contributing so far from areas of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A [recent research paper](#) estimates that invasive species, such as grey squirrels, have cost the UK economy over £5 billion over the past 40-50 years. It says costs are underestimated, rising and most are direct damages, but too little is spent on management and prevention.

UK Squirrel Accord continues to collect photographs or video footage of bark stripping in action or any resulting damage. Please contact us if you can help and email evidence to info@squirrelaccord.uk, or use [WeTransfer](#), with details of any photo/video credits to be included.



Red and grey squirrel research

PIT-tag method for measuring small mammal bait uptake

Animal and Plant Health Agency researchers carrying out our grey squirrel fertility control project published a paper on the use of specialised feeding hoppers to measure bait uptake.

The paper by Sarah Beatham et al. is freely available to download: [A PIT-tag-based method for measuring individual bait uptake in small mammals](#)

The feeding hopper was equipped with a PIT-tag reader and bait-weighing device to record the amount of bait taken by individual PIT-tagged grey squirrels during each separate visit.

In the woods, 47 of the 51 pit-tagged squirrels entered the hoppers. Hoppers effectively recorded the number of squirrel feeding visits and the amount of bait taken to an accuracy of 0.1g.

The bait will eventually contain an oral contraceptive to reduce grey squirrel numbers. This research will help to optimise the concentration of the contraceptive needed to induce infertility.

The hopper design is adaptable and could have wider future applications for wildlife management, wildlife disease control and/or population reduction.

Review of urban refugia suitability for Eurasian red squirrels

A systematic review of published literature was carried out to determine the suitability of urban habitats to act as refugia for the Eurasian red squirrel, which has suffered declines across the UK.

The paper by Kathryn Fingland et al. is free online: [A systematic review into the suitability of urban refugia for the Eurasian red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*](#)

Urban growth and intensification are increasing with the growing human population. While these areas have been classed as unsuitable for wildlife, they can be biodiverse as species adapt to the conditions.

The review found urban areas could support higher populations of red squirrels than rural areas through the availability of supplemental food alongside natural sources, and quality urban greenspaces.

Mortality of some urban red squirrel populations was found to be affected by issues such as road traffic accidents and diseases (effects of which can depend on grey squirrel presence).

Urban areas can present barriers, but red squirrels are still able to disperse and maintain gene flow. So urban locations are important red squirrel refugia.

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](#)