

Tree damage call for evidence



Grey squirrel bark stripping occurs between April and August. Damage to trees can be more obvious at this time of year, as vulnerable tissues are newly exposed beneath the protective outer bark – opening the tree up to infection from pests and pathogens.

UK Squirrel Accord continues to collect photographic 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 with details of any photo/video credits you wish to be included.



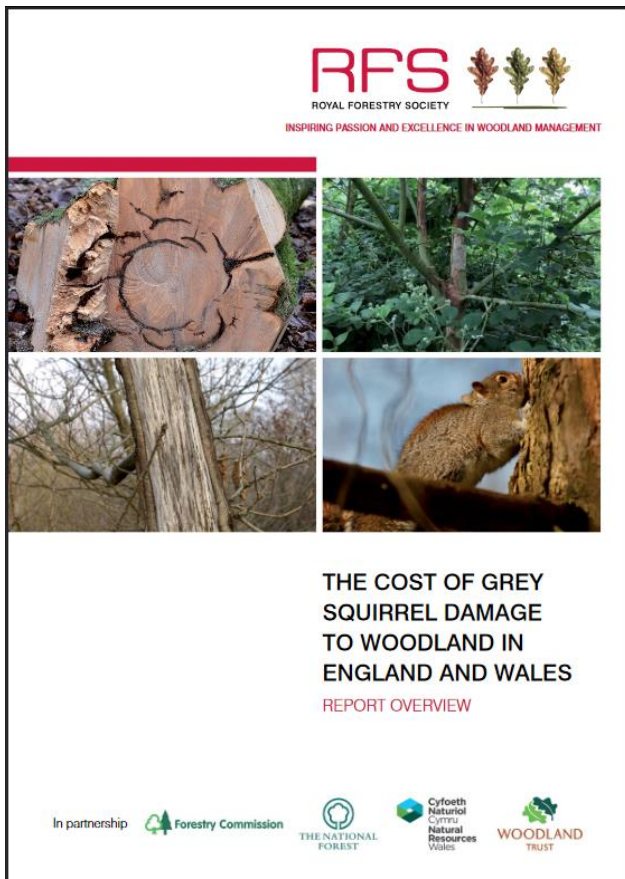
Grey squirrel reports

The Royal Forestry Society has published two reports. One with partners on the [Cost of Grey Squirrel Damage to Woodland in England and Wales](#). Followed by the [Grey Squirrel Control Survey Report 2021](#).

Cost of damage report: using data grey squirrel damage to trees in England and Wales is estimated to cost at least £37m a year in lost timber value, reduced carbon capture, damage mitigation and trees to replace those have died due to grey squirrel bark stripping.

Grey squirrel control report: grey squirrels are still seen as the greatest threat to broadleaf trees – more than pathogens and deer. However, no current management method is considered very effective and there is a need for more training. There is widespread support for the development of [fertility control](#), while natural predators are reportedly having an impact in some areas.

Both reports highlight the need for a standardised approach to assessing grey squirrel tree damage. UKSA is working to review and update the [methodology and recording sheet developed by The National Forest](#), with plans to encourage wider adoption across the sector.



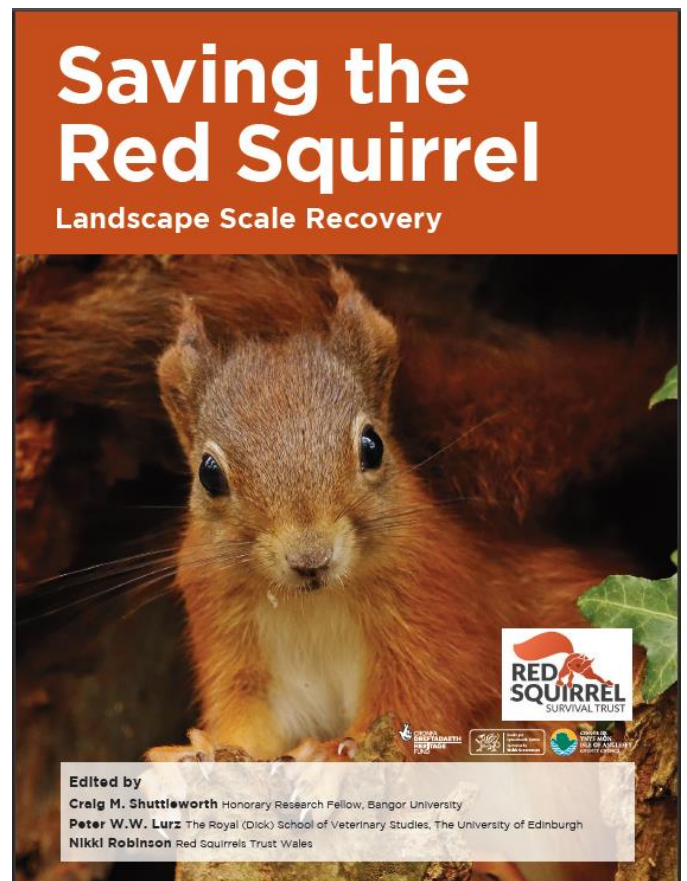
Saving the red squirrel

A red squirrel conservation e-book, edited by leading experts, is available to read via the Red Squirrel Survival Trust website: [Saving the Red Squirrel – Landscape Scale Recovery](#).

The book brings together ‘a large body of scientific evidence, frontline experience, and key insights on achieving landscape-scale recovery for red squirrel populations from leading practitioners’ across the UK.

Case studies highlight a range of important activities. They include the Elwy Valley field trial for our grey squirrel fertility control research; the work of many different projects and groups; the diseases for wildlife scheme; breeding red squirrels for conservation; red squirrel reintroductions and reinforcements; tree felling practices; and much more.

This new publication builds on and updates the 2015 *Shared experience of red squirrel conservation practice* book. It helps illustrate new technologies and developments, and share ongoing success stories. A must-read for anyone involved or interested in red squirrel conservation and grey squirrel management.



A programme celebrating work across Europe to save endangered species from extinction.

The recovery of the pine marten in Northern Ireland, which predates on the grey squirrel, is highlighted alongside Ulster Wildlife's work. UKSA footage of grey squirrel bark stripping was used to demonstrate wider issues of this invasive species.

Derek Mooney presents the programme, available via RTÉ One player. [Click here to watch.](#)

Plant Health Week

Defra-led Plant Health Week, 10-16 May. An opportunity to highlight the issues our plants face and potential solutions. [#planthealthweek](#)

Each day has a different focus and includes a variety of communications activities and events from Defra and wider stakeholders. Keep an eye on our [blog](#), [YouTube](#) and [Twitter](#) page.

Monday is an introduction to plant health, Tuesday focuses on wellbeing, Wednesday on buying responsibly, Thursday celebrates [science helping to address plant threats](#), Friday promotes the *clean your boots* message, while the weekend is all about [spotting pests and diseases](#).

Tree species are among the most important plants on the planet. They create oxygen, sequester carbon, clean our air and water, support biodiversity, provide valuable materials, and improve human health and wellbeing. Use this week to celebrate and raise awareness of our trees and the need to protect them.

Videos on the UK Squirrel Accord YouTube channel are proving popular – subscribe to receive notifications. And keep up to date with blog posts from various experts on our website.

[Recent videos:](#)

- Grey squirrel fertility control research update
- Grey squirrel bark stripping – The Yorkshire Arboretum
- Grey squirrel bark stripping damage – The National Forest

[Recent blog posts:](#)

- Reclaiming Reds: making Knowsley a place for red squirrels
- Managing invasive non-native grey squirrels to safeguard our native red squirrels and woodland biodiversity

Thanks to everyone viewing content and sharing with your networks.

Invasive Species Week webinar

Join our 26 May online event, 10:00-11:30 for [Invasive Species Week](#). Speakers introduce woodland invasive species then focus on issues grey squirrels pose to broadleaf tree health and endangered red squirrels in the UK, and important activities to manage those threats. Followed by an opportunity to ask the speakers questions.

- **Kay Haw – UK Squirrel Accord**
Woodland invasives and grey squirrel tree damage
- **Heinz Traut – Red Squirrels Northern England**
Managing invasive grey squirrels to safeguard native red squirrels and woodland biodiversity
- **Bridget Johnson – Knowsley Safari**
Reclaiming Reds: a new project to recover red squirrels

[Click here to register](#) in advance and share the event with others.



Webinar ~ Woodland invasives: grey squirrels
26 May 2021 ~ 10:00-11:30 ~ www.squirrelaccord.uk/events

Invasive Species Week 2021

Red squirrel research

Mitigating the impact of forest management on red squirrels

A recent paper shared findings from a study on the impacts of forest operations on red squirrels, the use of nest boxes as a conservation tool, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of drey surveying.

The paper by Louise de Raad, et al., is freely available to download: [Mitigating the impact of forest management for conservation of an endangered forest mammal species: drey surveys and nest boxes for red squirrels \(*Sciurus vulgaris*\)](#)

Results showed drey surveying to be inefficient. Only a small proportion of active dreys are detected by foresters and it is almost impossible to know if they are in use, as red squirrels have many dreys that they move between.

Nest boxes are seen as a useful way to reduce forestry operation impacts on red squirrels. When deployed early enough, they can provide important alternative shelter for red squirrels.

Louise has also published a blog post with Forestry and Land Scotland on [forest operations and red squirrel conservation](#), which looks at the impact of thinning and felling work in red squirrel woods.

Natural red squirrel strongholds in Scotland

Through development of a mathematical model, researchers aimed to assess red squirrel population viability and identify existing forests that would act as natural red squirrel strongholds.

The following paper on the research by Andrew Slade, et al., was published and is freely available to download: [Natural strongholds for red squirrel conservation in Scotland](#)

Analysis shows there are areas of Scottish forest north of the grey squirrel boundary that provide suitable habitat to support viable red squirrel populations without species specific management – providing grey squirrel management continues at its current level.

The study also looked at a worst-case scenario, if management ended and grey squirrels moved into all areas of Scotland – replacing red squirrels. It found geography in northern Scotland could act as an important boundary to protect red squirrels.

The model developed by the researchers could be used to identify similar natural red squirrel strongholds in other countries.

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](#)