

Year-end 2019



# NEWSLETTER

## WEBINARS

Catch up on the recent **Red Squirrels United** and **Red Squirrels Trust Wales** webinars:

**Invasive species management in New Zealand - Bruce Warburton:**  
<https://vimeo.com/335098577>

**England Countryside Stewardship (CS Woodland Options) grant scheme - Heinz Traut, RSNE:**  
<https://vimeo.com/375868476>

## BLOGS

**Missed any UKSA blogs?** The festive break may be a good opportunity to catch up on them, including:

**Biggest threat to the National Forest - grey squirrels - Daniel Small**

Read about the landscape scale activities the National Forest are coordinating to protect trees from grey squirrel bark stripping.

<http://squirrelaccord.uk/news/blog/biggest-threat-to-the-national-forest-grey-squirrels/>

**Great Scottish Squirrel Survey 2019 - Gillian Hatcher**

Read about the success of this Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels survey and get involved.

<http://squirrelaccord.uk/news/blog/great-scottish-squirrel-survey-2019-results/>

## FERTILITY CONTROL RESEARCH UPDATE

**We are now at the end of the second of the five-year grey squirrel fertility control research being carried out for us by the Animal and Plant Health Agency.** Strong progress has been made on the various workstreams and a blog with a detailed update can be found on the UK Squirrel Accord website:

[www.squirrelaccord.uk/news/blog/researching-a-new-hope-for-grey-squirrel-management/](http://www.squirrelaccord.uk/news/blog/researching-a-new-hope-for-grey-squirrel-management/)

A key finding so far is that feeding hoppers placed in a wood for just **four days** in summer can ensure the majority of grey squirrels consume bait that will ultimately contain a contraceptive. Trials showed the feasibility of **successfully working with volunteer groups** to deploy the hoppers. While mathematical modelling highlighted the **benefits of combining culling with fertility control** for effective eradication or reduction of grey squirrel numbers.

Work in 2020 will focus on **development of the oral contraceptive**, creating a system to **monitor the quantity of bait consumed** by grey squirrels on each visit to inform the strategy and **building on the success of working with volunteer groups** but on a larger scale. Coordinated effort will ultimately be essential for effective roll out of the fertility control in the future. We are exploring the potential to work with projects and partnerships that will **enable the oral contraceptive to be deployed at a landscape scale.**

## DONATIONS TO OUR WORK - THANK YOU

**Thank you to everyone that donated towards our grey squirrel fertility control research in 2019 - we could not do this without you.** Thanks to individual donors and organisations such as the Royal Forestry Society, whose member appeal has now raised £46,832. Your generosity is enabling us to develop an alternative tool for effectively managing grey squirrels to protect trees and red squirrels.

We still need to secure £250,000 to reach our target. If you can **help support this important research project** then we have an easy online PayPal option, along with other methods, on our UKSA website: [www.squirrelaccord.uk/donate](http://www.squirrelaccord.uk/donate)

## RSNE SURVEY

Red Squirrels Northern England annual squirrel monitoring [programme results](#) showed the range of red squirrel populations in northern England is being maintained and the species is still widely distributed in this area.

Without the dedication of the groups and organisations within the RSNE partnership, the future for red squirrels in northern England would be far bleaker.

## CASE STUDIES

Craig Shuttleworth is working on an updated version of the Red Squirrel Conservation Practice e-book. If you have case studies or best practice you would like included please contact Craig or email [info@squirrelaccord.uk](mailto:info@squirrelaccord.uk) to connect.

## RSU FAIR

The Wildlife Trusts successful Red Squirrels United project comes to a close at the end of March 2020.

Their annual Knowledge Fair offers the opportunity to share best practice and new ideas, and celebrate the efforts of the many individuals, groups and organisations involved in this field of conservation.

Their last event will be held in Newcastle 22-23 February 2020. Make sure you secure your place: <https://www.redsquirrelsunited.org.uk/knowledgefair/2020-knowledge-fair/>

## INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANT HEALTH

The United Nations has declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health. This is an important opportunity to highlight issues around biosecurity and problems caused by pests and diseases. UK Squirrel Accord will be working on increasing awareness around and action to prevent grey squirrel bark stripping of trees, which negatively impacts their health and survival rates.

**Photo contest:** the FAO is running a photography competition until 15 June 2020. They are asking people to submit images illustrating the beauty of healthy plants and the damage being inflicted on plants by pests, diseases and invasive species.

<http://www.fao.org/plant-health-2020/photo-contest/enter-the-contest/en/>

**Human-interest stories:** the FAO is looking for first-hand accounts of people contributing to plant health, the damage caused by plant pests and diseases, and how plant health can end hunger, reduce poverty and protect the environment.

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca5426en/ca5426en.pdf>

**Birmingham Institute of Forest Research:** join BIFoR at their fourth annual meeting 29-30 January 2020. This free event includes a joint programme with the Action Oak initiative on the first day to look at research on tree pests and diseases.

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/bifor/about/Fourth-BIFoR-annual-meeting.aspx>

**UK National Plant Health Week, 20-27 April 2020:** this new awareness week will provide a focus for issues and activities surrounding the health of the UK's plants, which will go on to become an annual event.

Keep an eye on **Defra's Plant Health Portal** for a soon-to-be-published calendar of events taking place during International Year of Plant Health 2020:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/latest-news/international-year-of-plant-health-2020/>



## RED SQUIRREL APPRECIATION DAY

**UK annual Red Squirrel Appreciation Day will take place on 21 January 2020.**

UK Squirrel Accord is planning a **Twitterstorm** to take place **12:00-14:00** on the day using the hashtag **#RedSquirrels2020**. Join us and spread the message that the **UK's red squirrels are worth saving**. Help us get more people involved in red squirrel conservation across the UK. Use the hashtag to send your own tweets and share those of others during this time. For more information look at the UKSA website news section nearer the day <https://squirrelaccord.uk/news/news> or email [info@squirrelaccord.uk](mailto:info@squirrelaccord.uk) to find out more and link up.