

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Get involved in Red Squirrel Appreciation Day
- Survey your woodland for grey squirrel bark stripping damage
- Support our fertility control programme's next phases
- Join us in 2023 for squirrel-related events

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Red Squirrel Appreciation Day

Join the red squirrel celebrations on 21 January 2023.

Every year this day helps raise awareness of endangered UK red squirrels. Do get involved...

Twitterstorm

Join our [annual Twitterstorm](#), 21 January 2023, 09:00-11:00.

Post, like and share as many tweets as possible over two hours using the hashtag

#RedSquirrelAppreciationDay

England action plan

The new England Red Squirrel Action Plan will publish on Red Squirrel Appreciation Day. This will join the plans and strategies already in progress in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

To celebrate its launch we will release a press notice for use by media and stakeholders. We also have an infographic and info video being designed for social media and websites.

We are building a stakeholder working group with representatives from UK Squirrel Accord signatories and red squirrel community groups. It will meet in 2023 to start delivery of the plan's actions to save England's red squirrels.



Red squirrel in the snow

Species champion

On 23 January 2023 UKSA will hold a live webinar with AM Darren Millar, Wales' Red Squirrel Species Champion.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom and join us. Ask Darren questions by submitting them when registering or during the event.

Further information

Graphics and further details on Red Squirrel Appreciation Day can be found on our events page: squirrelaccord.uk/events

If you have events you would like us to add to the website, and/or promote via social media and our networks, then email any details, images and links to: info@squirrelaccord.uk

Exmoor squirrel project

A new project plans to reduce the population of grey squirrels across Exmoor to assist recovery, expansion and resilience of trees and woodland.

Red Squirrel South West secured government funding to establish a programme of grey squirrel management between

Ilfracombe and Minehead. The Exmoor Squirrel Project is a partnership of public, private and 3rd sector organisations.

In a [BBC News article](#), Project Coordinator Mish Kennaway said "ancient oak woodlands in Devon were "going backwards" because grey squirrels were

destroying young saplings."

The project also aims to reduce grey squirrels to one day enable red squirrels to return to their former range. While many years away, this is only possible if invasive grey squirrels can be effectively removed from an area and this takes time.

Bark stripping survey



Grey squirrel repeat bark stripping damage in The National Forest

Grey squirrel bark stripping damage in England and Wales is estimated to cost £37 million a year in lost timber value, reduced carbon capture, damage mitigation, and tree replacements.

However, this is thought to be an underestimate and better surveying is needed to gain a clearer picture on impacts.

Survey for damage

The National Forest Company recently updated its Grey Squirrel Activity and Impact

Assessments methodology.

This work was carried out following initial surveys and feedback with the UK Squirrel Accord and contractors. In order to ensure the survey provided a robust, effective and time efficient method to monitor the impact of grey squirrels in woodland.

Complete the survey

The modified method and data collection sheets are on the research section of The National Forest website:

nationalforest.org/about/research. It is also a requirement for WS3: Squirrel Control funding through Countryside Stewardship.

Training

In 2023, UK Squirrel Accord will organise some in-person training events on how to carry out the survey.

Keep an eye on our events page: squirrelaccord.uk/events. Or sign up to our mailing list for updates: ee-purl.com/gFG6RX

“Project volunteers were also involved in the grey squirrel fertility control research.”

Westmorland work

Work of Westmorland Red Squirrels includes two local initiatives to reduce grey squirrel impacts.

Arnside and Silverdale

This Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lost its red squirrels in the 1970s. In 2015, an initiative began to manage grey squirrels to benefit local trees and biodiversity.

Project volunteers were also

involved in the grey squirrel fertility control research funded by the UK Squirrel Accord and delivered by the Animal & Plant Health Agency.

In the future, it is hoped red squirrels will again be seen in this area of Cumbria.

Grasmere to Grizdale

This G2G project hopes to secure conditions needed to enable red squirrels to thrive

in and around Hawkshead, Cumbria. Funding for a ranger was secured to carry out grey squirrel management.

Through mortgage sales, a collaboration with Cumbria Building Society will provide nest boxes to support reds displaced through tree loss.

To find out more email: secretary@westmorlandredsquirrels.org.uk

Wight squirrel book

A book with a wealth of red squirrel information



The Wight Squirrel Project published a book on 30 years, 1991-2022, of red squirrel research.

The aim is to provide a reference book for future red squirrel enthusiasts to use to enable them to

continue to map the progress of the island's red squirrels. Landowners and managers will also find it useful.

Content

The book is in three parts including data, descriptions and findings of post mortem examinations, along with details of a red squirrel's life

and projects such as rope bridges. There are sections dedicated to research and surveys. As well as material for educational use.

The project is subsidizing these large books and they are for sale at £35 each plus P&P. To get a copy, email wightsquirrels@hotmail.com

Fertility control research



Year four of the UK Squirrel Accord funded [grey squirrel fertility control research project](#) ends and we head into the final year five.

The project being delivered by researchers at the Animal & Plant Health Agency is progressing well.

Research
Red squirrel on feeder weighing platform
 In year four, two oral contraceptive routes were tested. The focus is now on the immunocontraceptive as the prime candidate.

Refining the species specificity of the feeding hopper continues. This summer a weighing platform was tested to gather red and grey squirrel weights.

Watch an update on our YouTube channel: youtu.be/lXvoP-sRDTU

Fundraising
 We successfully reached the £1 million funding target needed to complete the research project. A huge thanks to all our donators!
 Fundraising focus is now for the wider fertility control programme:

- Research & development
- Landscape-scale trials
- Registration
- Widespread availability

Donate online to support:
squirrelaccord.uk/donate

“Media coverage in July resulted in 115 million views of fertility control articles.”

Squirrel comms

Communications work in 2022 resulted in a rise in media coverage around our grey squirrel fertility control research.

On 11 July, [BBC News reported](#) on the research project and a press release was picked up by several other national and local outlets. Media coverage in July resulted in 115 million views of fertility control articles.

On 21 August, [BBC Countryfile](#) included a section on grey squirrel bark stripping damage. They covered solutions such as traditional methods alongside our fertility control work and the gene drive.

A [short film](#) on the potential use of gene drive to reduce grey squirrel numbers aired in November.

UKSA delivered a number of webinars across the year that are avail-

able on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/uksquirrelaccord. These include a fertility control research update and annual red squirrel conservation update.

Our [bark stripping short film](#) is the most viewed video on our channel. We plan to create a short film to promote grey squirrel fertility control once we are further along with this work.

RSNE Spring Survey

Red Squirrels Northern England (RSNE) works with community groups, volunteers and others to conduct an annual Squirrel Spring Monitoring Programme.

The collaborative survey of 300 sites across Northern England takes place between March and May. Since 2012, results feed into a database of red and grey squirrel presence and absence. It is the

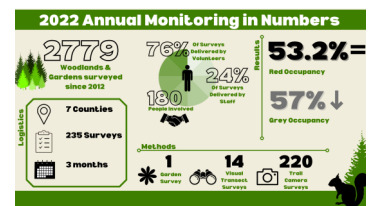
only systemic evidence base of its kind and contributes to targeted conservation work.

2022 success

Positive 2022 results showed red squirrels in the same proportion of sites as 2021 (53.2%) and grey squirrels in 2.9% fewer sites (57%). This confirms the efforts of all those involved are successfully

protecting the red squirrel population and reducing the grey squirrel threat.

RSNE is a Northumberland Wildlife Trust partnership project working with community groups, volunteers, supporters and local landowners.



Infographic of RSNE 2022 annual monitoring numbers



Email: info@squirrelaccord.uk
Website: www.squirrelaccord.uk

Protecting red squirrels and trees

The UK Squirrel Accord is a UK partnership working together to protect and expand red squirrel populations, and ensure we have healthy trees and woods for future generations.

We are fundraising for our [grey squirrel fertility control](#) programme to reduce the negative impacts of this invasive species on red squirrels, trees and woodland ecosystems. [Donate online](#) to support our work.

Events 2023

Get involved in events in 2023 to raise awareness and share knowledge.

To add anything to our events page email: info@squirrelaccord.uk

21 January—Red Squirrel Appreciation Day: See the front page of this newsletter to get involved and celebrate our red squirrels. [Join our Twitterstorm](#).

23 January—webinar with AM Darren Miller: hear from Wales' Red Squirrel Species Champion. [Click to register](#).

03 March—online pine marten conference: for World Wildlife Day speakers discuss pine marten recovery in relation to red squirrel conservation and living with a native predator. [Click to register](#).

08-14 May—Plant Health Week: help raise awareness of the tree impacts of grey squirrel bark stripping damage and share evidence.

15-21 May—Invasive Species Week: along with communications we will organise grey squirrel tree impact assessment training.

www.squirrelaccord.uk/events

Research

Along with research into [grey squirrel fertility control](#), the UK Squirrel Accord is involved in other squirrel-related areas and is forming a new research subcommittee in 2023.

Grey squirrel
tree bark
stripping in
Devon

Red Squirrel
South West



Bark stripping

PhD student Alexandra Ash created a poster on her systematic literature review of squirrel bark stripping, which she presented at the British Ecological Society (BES) Annual Conference. It can be viewed via our [Resources Library](#).

In 2023, Alex will conduct an analysis of various bark-stripping datasets. She hopes to better understand tree and stand susceptibility to bark stripping and what may cause this behaviour.

As a parallel project, Alex will explore ethical considerations of grey squirrel management. She will conduct interviews with practitioners in 2023.

Pine marten effects

A [recently published paper](#) by Slade et al. looked at indirect benefits of pine marten recovery as a native predator.

Using North Wales as a case study, the team developed a model that represents habitat structure, distribution, and connectivity, and models interactions of red and grey squirrels, squirrelpox virus, and pine marten.

The model demonstrates the potential role of pine marten in regulating invasive grey squirrels via predation. Also, that less grey squirrels means less squirrelpox virus, which they only carry but that is deadly to red squirrels.