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Bark stripping campaign launch



Plant Health Week, 09-15 May, we launch our campaign to gather visual evidence of grey squirrel bark stripping. A campaign toolkit provides key messages, images and suggested social media posts to promote the campaign. The toolkit is available from our [resources library](#) or email info@squirrelaccord.uk for a copy. Also, share our video explainer on [Twitter](#). Get involved to help us gather evidence and raise awareness of tree damage.



Red Squirrel Strategy for Northern Ireland

Ulster Wildlife recently published their new [Red Squirrel Conservation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2022 – 2032](#). This ten-year strategy aims to ensure red squirrel conservation is a priority and identify key actions to secure their future.

Jon Lees, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum, believes that due to the dedication of community groups and landowners 'the red squirrel in Northern Ireland is possibly in the strongest position it has been for three generations' – great news.

However, he warns that 'now is not the time to become complacent'. Grey squirrels are still a major problem and although the pine marten predator is recovering across the island of Ireland, urban environments are unlikely to be inhabited by them so will remain refuges for grey squirrel populations.

The strategy highlights the importance of partnership working across Northern Ireland, but also on an All-Ireland and UK basis. Katy Bell, Ulster Wildlife, says 'the future is looking positive for red squirrels in Northern Ireland, as long as we all work together'. The UK Squirrel Accord commends this new strategy and will work with the Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum to support its delivery.



Actions needed to achieve the strategy's aims are:

- Grey squirrels
 - Anthropogenic grey squirrel management
 - Pine marten as an agent of grey squirrel control
- Monitoring / surveys
- Public support / awareness
- Disease control
- Releases and translocations
- Future policy and research
- Nature Recovery Networks

If you live in Northern Ireland, get involved with or support your local red squirrel conservation group. [Click here to find out more](#) about these groups.

Volunteer of the Year 2021

Congratulations to Glens Red Squirrel Group's Gerard McCaughan for winning the Red Squirrel Survival Trust's Volunteer of the Year award for 2021.

Gerard said, 'I was surprised I'd been nominated let alone won. I felt chuffed and embarrassed in equal measures. I think it's a reflection of what we do as a group, rather than what I do myself'. The bronze squirrel was awarded to Gerard at a group meeting.

[Find out more](#) about Gerard and the work of the Glens Red Squirrel Group via the Red Squirrel Survival Trust website. [Email the group](#), one of the first community groups for red squirrel conservation in Northern Ireland, to support or get involved in their work.

Keep an eye out for the opening of nominations for Volunteer of the Year 2022. Nominate someone you would like to see recognised for their dedication to red squirrel conservation.

To get involved in red squirrel conservation in other areas of the UK [click here to find a group near you](#).



RSNE squirrel app

Red Squirrels Northern England has a new app you can use to record and report squirrel sightings easily via your phone. Ulster Wildlife will soon launch one for Northern Ireland.

Reporting sightings of red and grey squirrels is vital for conservation efforts. RSNE now offers a simple way to record sightings through a [new app](#) or by filling in a [simple web form](#). This also helps to standardise recorded data making it easier to analyse.

Heinz Traut drove the app's creation and many other successes. He leaves RSNE and we thank him for his contribution to England's red squirrel conservation work. RSNE colleague Mike Denbury steps up to fill the role and we wish him every success.

Fertility control update

We are now in year four of the five-year research phase of the grey squirrel fertility control programme. Year three saw successful progress on development of the oral contraceptive and feeding hopper needed to effectively reduce grey squirrel populations.

Four phases needed to deliver grey squirrel fertility control for the UK:

1. Research and development – ends January 2024
2. Landscape-scale trials – in development
3. Testing for registration – in development
4. Widespread availability of registered methods

Research update – 13 July

Join the UK Squirrel Accord and key members of the Animal and Plant Health Agency team delivering the research for an online update to discuss year three progress and aims for year four. Register for our webinar on 13 July 2022, 10:00-12:00, via this Zoom link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KMCYY2VKS-u0l8MSD_nybg

Please share this event with others that may be interested. Details are also available on our events page: www.squirrelaccord.uk/events

Awareness weeks

[Plant Health Week](#) and [Invasive Species Week](#) are both coming up in May – opportunities to raise awareness of grey squirrel impacts.

[Plant Health Week](#), 09-15 May, offers a chance to raise awareness of pests and pathogens impacting plant species and work to resolve these problems. See the front page for our [campaign on grey squirrel bark stripping](#). #PlantHealthWeek

[Invasive Species Week](#), 16-22 May, highlights the damage invasive species cause across the UK and the various projects working to reduce and eradicate these species. Sign up for our [online grey squirrel fertility control research update](#) to find out about progress. #InvasivesWeek

Get involved and share information.

Videos and blogs

Our latest videos are on the [UK Squirrel Accord YouTube channel](#) – subscribe to receive notifications. [Keep an eye on our blog](#) for a post launching our 2022 grey squirrel bark stripping campaign, which will be published on 09 May for Plant Health Week.

Videos:

- [Woodland habitats, red squirrels and pine martens with Josh Twining, Heinz Traut and Louise de Raad](#)
- [Woodland management and grey squirrel damage webinar with Charles Dutton and Graeme McVittae](#)
- [Grey squirrel bark stripping interview with Nick Cooke](#)

Blog posts:

- [International Women and Girls in Science Day 2022 – APHA team](#)
- [Developing a grey squirrel feeder for targeted contraceptive delivery – Sarah Beatham](#)

Please share this content with your networks to spread knowledge. Content can also be used to help highlight our grey squirrel bark stripping campaign, including the popular short film we created on [bark stripping damage to trees – issues and solutions](#), which has been viewed over 7,000 times.