



Newsletter

Autumn 2014

Welcome to the Autumn 2014 Newsletter!

There's been some change in our team over the last 6 months. We've said good bye to Red Squirrel Officer Emma Wright who is now Conservation Officer for the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership Scheme. Red Squirrel Rangers Jamie Stewart and Jerry Sinclair have both left to return to their gamekeeping roots having both worked for several years in red squirrel conservation. Eden Valley Ranger John Lisle has joined the Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group team. Finally, Research Assistant Dr Katie Frith has completed her ambassador site studies and we wish her luck in her next adventure.

New members to join the team include Red Squirrel & Woodland Officer for north-east England, Heinz Traut. Heinz has previously worked for us carrying out monitoring before joining Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels in south-west Scotland. We're excited to welcome him back to RSNE and look forward to him being part of the team again.

Thank you for your continuing support for our project and we're looking forward to what the coming year will bring!

Nick Mason
Project Manager



Red squirrel in county Durham



Seeing wild red squirrels in Grasmere with Gillian from Biffa Award

Big thanks Biffa Award!

Three years of fantastic support from Biffa Award, a fund financed by landfill tax credits donated by Biffa Group Limited, comes to an end this month. Their million pound grant has been central to the establishment of our project and the Biffa Award team have been hugely helpful in guiding and encouraging our work. We look forward to keeping the Biffa Award team in touch as our work continues.



Building communities. Transforming lives.

Monitoring Spring 2014

Following three months of spring survey work in 289 woodlands and gardens across northern England, analysis confirms that the red squirrel range has remained stable over the last two years.

The good news is that we found that red squirrel range has remained stable since the last monitoring round in autumn 2013, despite a 9% increase in the number of tetrads with grey squirrels.

Increases in grey squirrel detection were expected following a mild winter and seemingly abundant wild nut and berry supply. This serves as a stark reminder that the future of the red squirrel on the English mainland is entirely in the hands of committed individuals, groups and organisations currently working together.

Our broad conservation community is growing ever more certain that this high quality science is reflecting the positive impact of sustained hard work.

Hundreds of people working together are conserving this beautiful animal. This investment must continue to maintain this success. Thank you as ever to the 100 volunteers who help us to carry out this work. The next survey round will be in spring 2015.

The full report is available to view on our website at rsne.org.uk/squirrel-monitoring-programme



Red and grey Squirrel caught together on trail camera. Photo: Alastair Krzyzosiak

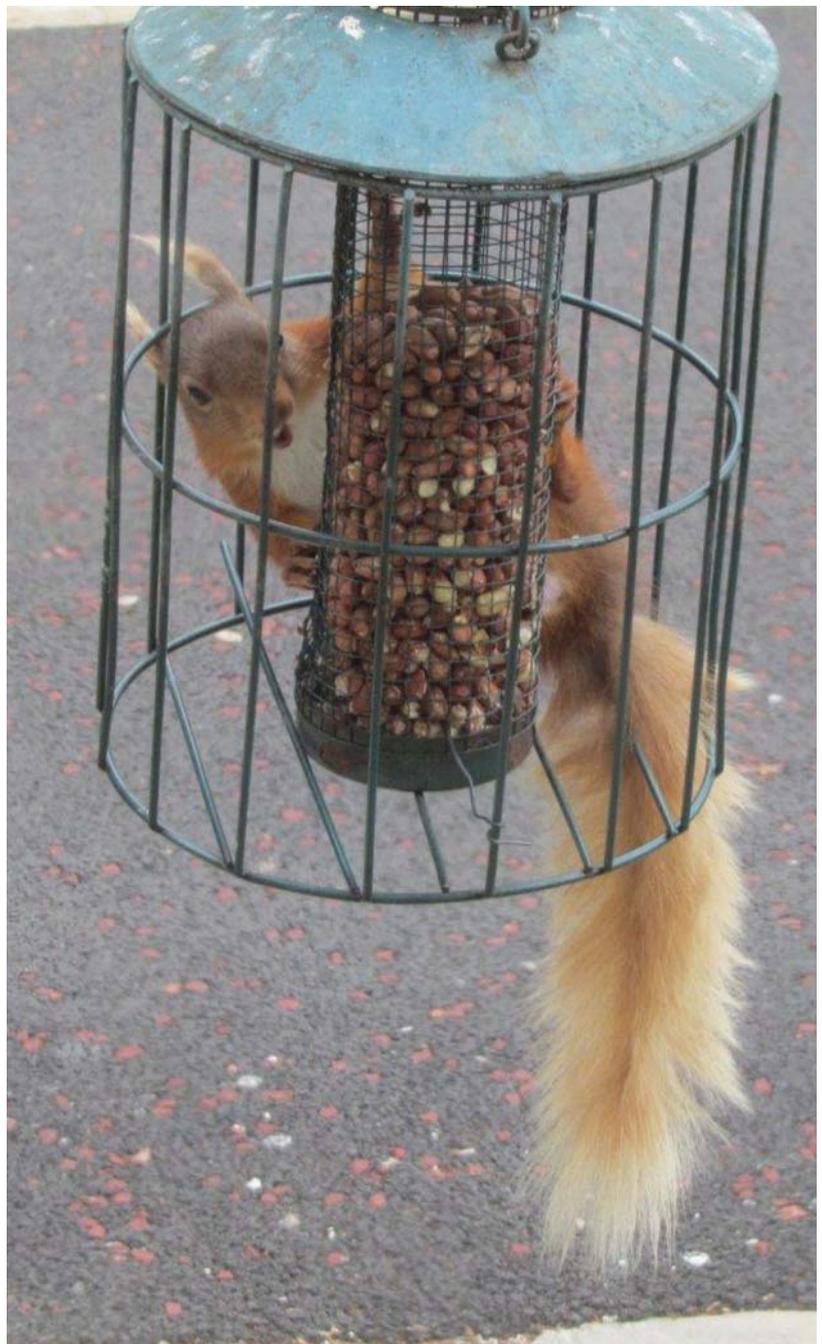
Up Hill and Down Dale

One of interesting themes of this year has been our ever changing knowledge of red squirrel status in the Pennines, both in the Yorkshire Dales and the North Pennines AONB.

A rash of “new” red squirrel sightings from the northern Yorkshire Dales and Teesdale in the North Pennines have excited residents and our partners.

Partnership working with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Edward Downs Forestry and Wensleydale Red Squirrel Group will explore the extent of potential extensions of red squirrel range in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale over the next year and assess the need to consolidate conservation measures.

Just a little further north, red squirrels have been photographed at six different spots in Teesdale this spring and summer. Enthusiastic press coverage from the Teesdale Mercury and the North Pennines AONB Partnership has encouraged more information sharing from residents, adding to the volume of new information. Durham Wildlife Trust are now following up on these sightings with some winter survey work to try to determine if reds have taken up residence in some of Teesdale’s woodlands again. We will let you know the outcome of both these developments next year.



Red squirrel in Cotherstone. Photo: Tom Hicks

New Squirrelpox Study

A study into squirrelpox virus (SQPV) on Merseyside led by Dr Julian Chantrey and Dr Tim Dale of Liverpool University has recently been published.

From 2002, surveys indicated that the red squirrel population on Merseyside was generally stable until a sudden decline of 87% between autumn 2007 and March 2009, due to an outbreak of SQPV. After extensive modelling of blood and tissue testing in red squirrels, the researchers concluded that up to 8% of red squirrels may survive outbreaks, although further studies are required.

The authors also highlight how effective red squirrels may be at transmitting infection to one another and suggest that high density red squirrel populations will be extra vulnerable to disease outbreaks causing significant population mortality.

The full journal article, entitled “*European red squirrel population dynamics driven by squirrelpox at a gray squirrel invasion interface*” is freely available online.



Forestry Commission training day

Forestry Commission Training Day

Over 40 people have been trained to trap grey squirrels in Forestry Commission owned woodlands in the last 18 months.

Attendees to the 4 days run so far have heard from Forestry Commission staff about the work they do to protect red squirrels across their estate and learn more about how red squirrel conservation is taken into consideration during woodland management. The afternoon consisted of a practical session on grey squirrel control. All of those who have attended are now able to trap in agreed Forestry Commission woodlands.

The next training day will be held in Spring 2015. To register your interest, please contact Russell Tait on **07881 863 973** or **russell.tait@rsne.org.uk**.

Filming

We've been busy filming over the summer for several different projects. Firstly, we were delighted to welcome Welsh television presenter Iolo Williams and his film crew to Hareshaw Linn in May, where they captured some fantastic footage of a range of behaviours, including several 'chases' in the dawn sunlight. The programme, title Dros y Ffin, which translates as Over the Border, will cover the natural history of Northumberland and is scheduled to be broadcast on Welsh language channel S4C in early 2015

Katy Cook and Russell Tait, along with North Tyne and Redesdale Red Squirrels group leader Adrian Rawlins, then filmed some more fantastic red squirrel footage for a BBC 2 production marking 50 years of the Pennine Way., which will be broadcast next spring. Finally, we have recently been filming for the forthcoming series of Robson Green's Tales From Northumberland, which will include footage of Robson releasing a rescued red squirrel. Keep your eyes peeled on the TV schedules!



S4C filming with Iolo Williams.



If you have any queries about your membership or would like any more information, please contact **Christine Westerback** on **0191 284 6884** or **christine.westerback@rsne.org.uk**.

We'd love to hear from you!



www.rsne.org.uk

 /RedSquirrelsNorthernEngland

 @RedSquirrelsNE

