



Newsletter

Autumn 2012

Welcome to the Friends of the Red Squirrel

Since the spring newsletter, our Ranger team have worked hard through the very wet summer to control grey squirrels across parts of Northumberland, Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Merseyside. The spring squirrel range monitoring programme is also published and the autumn repeat about to begin. You can find more information about both of these work areas inside this newsletter.

The constant stream of photos and videos shared through our Facebook and Twitter pages also shows how many of you are still enjoying red squirrels in gardens and local woodlands every day, providing even more motivation for the whole team.

Your support is more valuable than ever as we begin to raise more funds to intensify our efforts in 2013. As mentioned previously, subscription rates will rise next year, and we will write to you in due course when your Friends membership is up for renewal. Thanks again for your continuing support.

Nick Mason
RSNE Project Manager



Thanks to Peter Skillen for this great photo of a red squirrel eating a fungus.



Learning about red and grey squirrels

Community Action

In Northumberland, RSNE employ two staff to work alongside the Northern Red Squirrels network of volunteers to help engage people with the red squirrels in their local area. We have been giving talks, visiting schools and attending shows to spread awareness of the plight of our native red and the threats presented by grey squirrels.

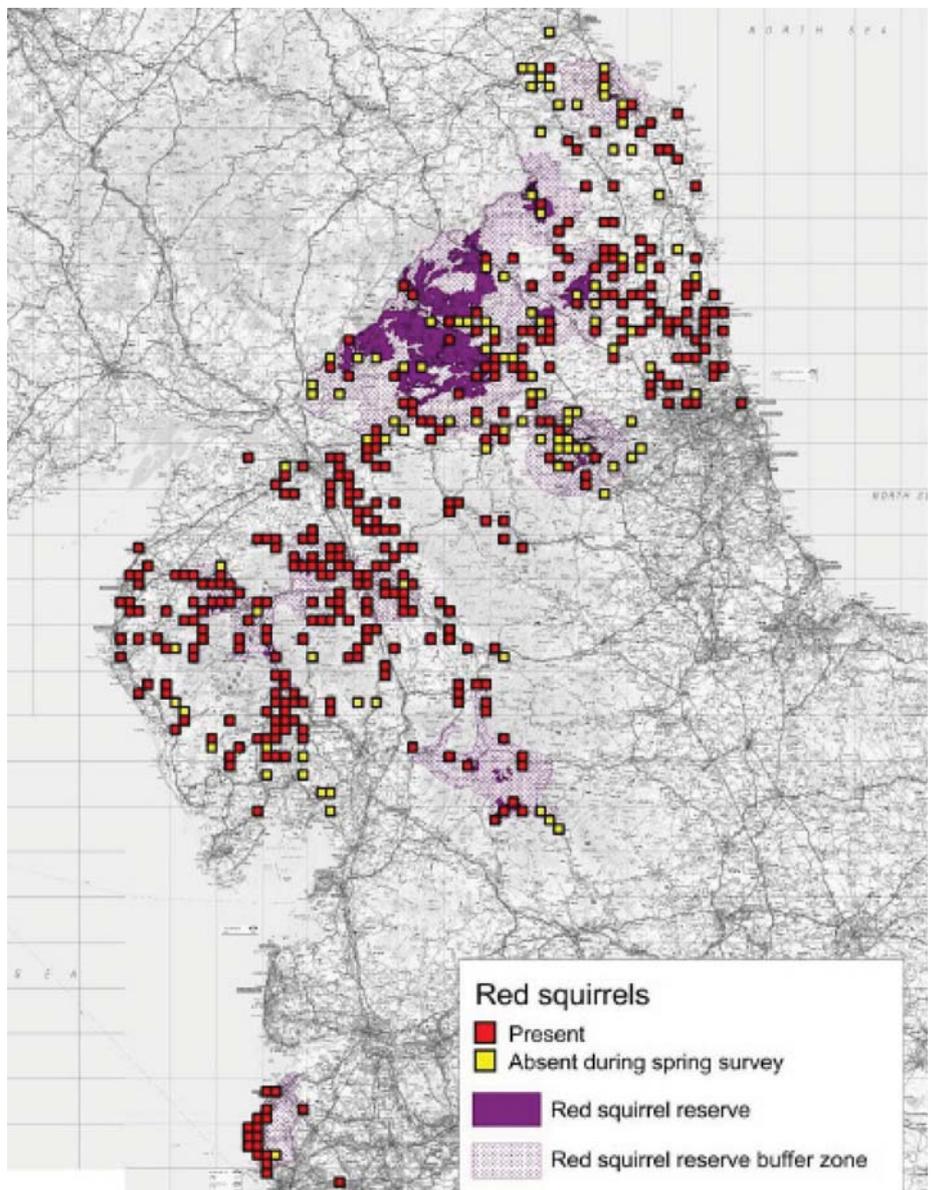
Highlights have included a talk in Rothbury in conjunction with the local group which was attended by over 100 people and the Children's Countryside Day up in Wooler – over 1300 primary school children attended the event and kept us busy with all their questions! There has been an overwhelmingly positive response to the project at every event we attend showing us that there is a huge amount of enthusiasm for reds!

Anyone can get involved and help in a number of ways: sightings, monitoring, fundraising, awareness raising, IT support, grey control... the list is almost endless! To find out more about the work of Northern Red Squirrels please visit www.northernredsquirrels.org.uk

Monitoring Results

Woodlands across northern England were surveyed between March and May for the presence of red and grey squirrels, with encouraging results. In all, 248 2x2km squares were visited to establish which species of squirrels were living there. This number was approximately doubled by including the records of sightings and captures submitted to us directly and via the NRS local groups. The map of these compiled records for red squirrels shows that the species is still widespread across Northumberland, Cumbria, the Yorkshire Dales and the Sefton Coast. However, grey squirrels were detected right across the project area, showing there is no room for complacency.

The surveys will be repeated biannually so that we can measure change. The next round of monitoring will run from mid September to the end of November. As ever, we would like to say a big thank you to everyone involved in making this happen. We couldn't do it without you!



Distribution of red squirrels across northern England

EGGER backs Red Squirrel Conservation

EGGER is one of the leading manufacturers of wood based panels in Europe. EGGER UK Limited has recently seen an exciting period of growth, having benefited from one of the largest business investments in the north east. This has involved significant redevelopment of the existing Hexham site into one of the most technologically advanced in Europe. As part of its ongoing support for biodiversity and conservation, EGGER UK Ltd is partnering RSNE as part of the monitoring and research programme.



The EGGER site in Hexham

Steven Batey, storage coordinator and administrator at the Hexham plant, is a red squirrel volunteer carrying out survey work near his home in Wark Forest. He commented: "EGGER is a family-owned company which has always placed great importance on protecting the natural environment. It is heavily involved in the UK forestry industry and good stewardship and sustainability are key priorities when it comes to sourcing raw materials. We are therefore delighted to support RSNE."

Conservation Action

Our 15 Rangers have been trapping in woodlands across northern England since early spring. All but three of the team have been catching (and releasing!) red squirrels as they go about their grey control work, showing that they are correctly placed at the interface between red and grey populations. We knew when the project was designed that we would have to be flexible in our approach to how the rangers work and the differences between each patch have confirmed this.

Our rangers have been submitting their trapping records each month, enabling us to build a detailed picture of the current conservation picture. It already seems clear that we urgently need more resources to safeguard some of the Northumberland reserves and surrounding strongholds. Our current Slaley Forest appeal is one attempt raise funds to expand our team in 2013 but more fund raising efforts continue. For more information about the appeal, please visit www.nwt.org.uk

Partnership work with The National Trust

The National Trust has long been associated with red squirrel conservation, with Formby in Merseyside and Borrowdale in Cumbria particular examples of Trust success in the face of significant conservation challenges. The Trust is now working in partnership across northern England to help conserve resident red squirrels across a host of their properties. The Trust are also represented on the RSNE Project Advisory Group, sharing their success and experience with other partners.



A recent example of this partnership in action is The National Trust's estate at Wallington, which covers 15 farms and 30 square miles. For a long time one of the best places to watch red squirrels in Northumberland, in the last few years increasing numbers of grey squirrels have come to the estate with the result that fewer red squirrels are seen each year.

This spring, Emma Wright from RSNE helped Paul Hewitt, Countryside Manager at Wallington, secure a five year Forestry Commission grant towards grey squirrel control. Glen Graham, RSNE ranger, has spent ten weeks intensively trapping grey squirrels on the estate, and staff and visitors are already seeing red squirrels return to the grounds. NT staff and their Green Team volunteers will continue trapping grey squirrels in between intensive periods of trapping by RSNE rangers, ensuring a programme of sustainable and continuous grey squirrel control. Long term monitoring programmes are also being established between RSNE and NT so that we can measure the impact of strategic red squirrel conservation at Wallington.



Staff and volunteers at Wallington

Importantly, RSNE are working closely with neighbouring landowners around Wallington to ensure that all the trapping efforts are joined up across the landscape. This close partnership between the National Trust staff and volunteers, RSNE and local red squirrel volunteers will hopefully soon return Wallington to its former status as one of the best places to watch red squirrels in Northumberland. Similar local partnerships continue to grow on National Trust estates throughout the red squirrel's English range, blending volunteer and organisational commitment to help reds flourish.



Red Squirrel Rescue!

Morpeth and District Red Squirrels received a call back in July about some red squirrel kittens that had been abandoned after their drey was blown down during a storm. The group leapt into action and care was given to the youngsters by one of the group members, an experienced zoologist. The babies grew up into healthy adults and were duly released back into the wild.

Squirrel kittens on the road to recovery

Fundraising

We're very lucky to be the chosen project of several different fundraising schemes, which you can read more about below. We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who is helping us out.

Simon Phillpotts, a Yorkshire Dales based wildlife photographer, has decided to give something back to the red squirrels that have provided him with hours of enjoyment. Profits from every sale of the limited edition print, 'Simply Red' will be donated to RSNE to help with our efforts in preserving this iconic animal. Each print costs £95 (plus £10 P+P) and is 28x20 inches in size. For more information, you can contact Simon at enquiries@wilddales.co.uk or call **01969 663000**.



Simon Phillpotts showing off 'Simply Red'

The Red Squirrel Survival Trust is one of the lucky charities able to take advantage of this year's Big Give Christmas Challenge. In the next few weeks, they will be working hard to secure leading pledges to support the RSNE project. On 6 December, they have the challenge of raising £10,000 in just two weeks. The appeal will be run online and if RSST are able to raise this sum, then the pledgers and the Big Give Champions Fund will make their contributions which could result in donations being doubled. Please look out for the appeal in early December and if you are able to help, please act as quickly as you can. www.rsst.org.uk

Christmas is just around the corner! Have you considered giving membership of Friends of the Red Squirrel to a friend or loved one this year?



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

 facebook.com/RedSquirrelsNorthernEngland

