



Save our Squirrels Berwick Group

Squirrel Times

December 2012



Hi All, and may we wish you a **very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.**

Time for another edition of our Group's newsletter. A lot has been happening since the last one so here goes.

Group's Activities during 2012

1. **Kyloe Stronghold**

As in previous years the Group have been working in the Kyloe Stronghold this year, working closely with RSNE.

As you know this Stronghold was set up to conserve the population of red squirrels and consists of 6 woods, Kyloe, Shiellow, Detchant, Kettleburn, Fenwick and Holburn.

In addition there is a 5 kilometre buffer zone surrounding the Stronghold making up the Reserve.

Within this buffer zone there are numerous woods many having populations of red squirrels but also numbers of grey squirrels.

1a **Common plan to conserve red squirrels within the Stronghold**

Earlier this year with Emma Wright (RSNE) we continued our discussions with the landowners and managers to agree a common plan to conserve reds in the Stronghold. It was agreed that we would monitor/survey each wood at regular intervals and trap as and when required.

1b **Squirrelpox Virus**

In February a red squirrel was found in Shiellow woods that tested positive for the squirrelpox virus.

The Group consulted with RSNE and RSSS as to the best course of actions to take to minimise the effect of any pox outbreak.

It was agreed that the Group needed to take control measures throughout all the woods making up the Stronghold in order to remove all grey squirrels and any infected reds that were trapped.

At this time all monitoring equipment was also removed to minimise potential locations for cross infection.

As a result of this the Group's normal programme for the conservation of red squirrels in the Stronghold was disrupted.

During February and March we undertook a rolling programme of live trapping throughout the woods, starting in Shiellow, working through Detchant and Kettleburn and finishing in Kyloe.

Throughout this period we undertook daily surveys and monitoring as well as inspecting and maintaining up to 48 traps that were live in the woods.

No further reds were found with the pox, no reds were trapped, and only 3 greys were removed from Detchant and Kettleburn.

1c **Ongoing Monitoring**

Following this period of continuous work and a period to allow any outbreak to run its course, we replaced all of the monitoring equipment (hair tubes and monitoring feeder boxes) on the transects and elsewhere in each of the woods, and established a regular survey/monitoring regime during the last week of each month to identify new incursions by grey squirrels.

Monitoring in Kyloe Woods has only proved evidence of red squirrels, with large areas of feeding sign in some locations.

Detchant Woods has evidence of red squirrels with some grey incursion coming in from the south west. This year to date we have removed 8 grey squirrels and trapped and released 1 very angry red.

Kettleburn appears to be the main incursion route into the Stronghold. As a result of this the Group has installed further monitoring equipment and conduct very frequent visits to monitor for greys. Over 8 control periods we have removed 8 greys and seen no sign of reds.

Following the pox outbreak, monitoring in Shiellow Woods showed little sign of squirrels. However the surveys in September showed evidence of reds in a single location, and in November three separate locations, with another area of fresh feeding sign. This is positive news as it appears that reds are re-colonising this area.

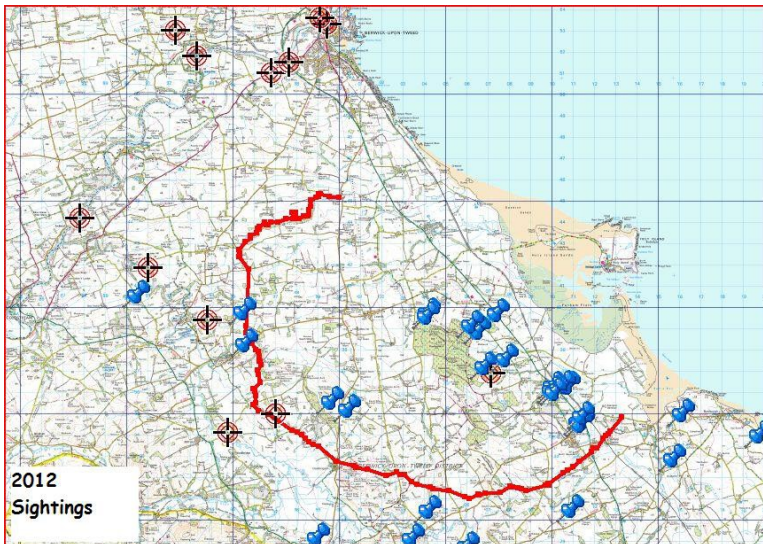
Surveys in Fenwick Woods has only shown evidence of re-population by red squirrels after a number of greys had been removed previously.

We are still unable to account for the continuing incursion of grey squirrels into Kettleburn and Detchant as all sightings and monitoring in the woodland lying immediately to the south of the Stronghold only show red squirrels.

2. Rest of north Northumberland

Throughout the rest of north Northumberland we are still finding much evidence of red squirrels and generally only finding small populations of greys apart from along the main incursion routes.

Sightings Map.



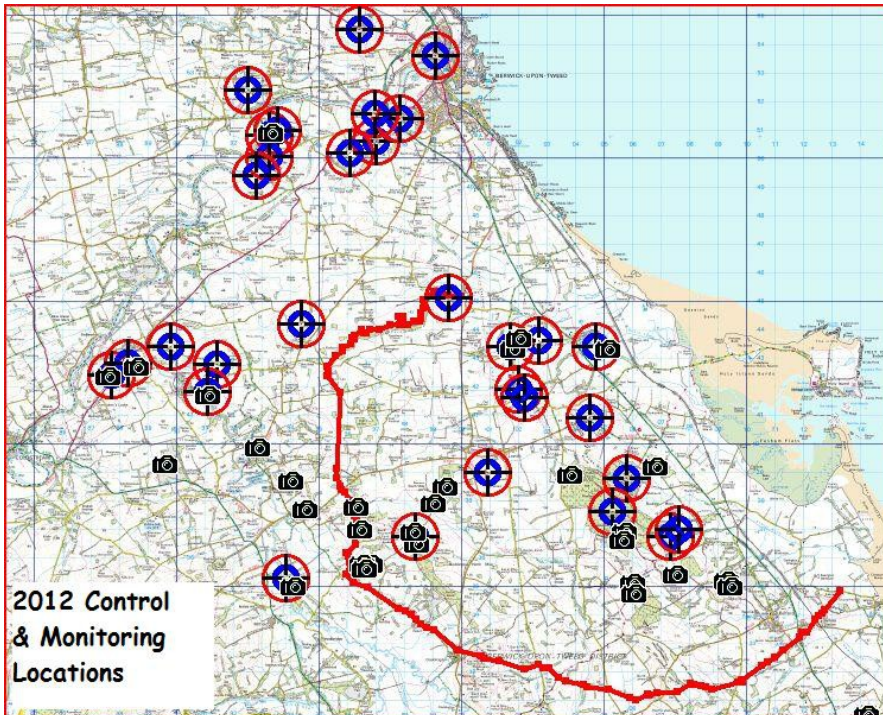
Targets are sightings of Greys
Pins are sightings of Reds

Control & Monitoring Map.

Woodland name & name of nearest village/estate	No. of live trap or shoot days	No. of grey kills	No. of reds caught	No. of greys seen	No. of reds seen
Berrington Wood Total	14	6	0		
Brick Kiln, Duddo Total	5	0	0		
Castle Hills Total	19	11	0		
Castle Vale Total	2	0	0		
Chainbridge Total	14	10	0		
Chainbridge House Total	4	1	0		
Common Plantation Total	14	3	0		
Detchant Total	32	8	1		
Felkington Farm Total	0	19	0		
Glen Ord, East Ord Total	19	5	0		
Glen Ord, East Ord. Total	4	3	0		
Grassy Woods, Ford. Total	11	4	0		
Haydon Dean Total	4	3	0		
Haydon Dene, Ancroft Total	17	16	0		
Horncliffe House Total	10	2	0		
Horncliffe Mill Total	0	5	0		
Kettleburn Total	41	8	0		
Kyloe Total	15	0	0		
Kyloe Dean Total	3	1	1		
Lickar Dean Total	8	2	0		
Lindisfarne Cottage, Lowick High Steads	26	3	0		
Longridge School Total	5	2	0		
Longridge Towers Total	14	20	0		
Lowick Mill (Ian Jackson) Total	9	6	0		
Lowick Mill (Ronnie Bulman) Total	3	0	0		
Middle Ord/ Tweedbakh/14th/2013	6	0	0		
Nabdean/Knapdene Total	7	7	0		
New Haggerston Farm Total	12	0	0		

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Tillmouthe Park Hotel Total	7	1	0	1	0
Tiptoe Farm Wood Total	28	29	0	0	0
Grand Total	412	200	2	29	2



To date this year we have culled 200 grey squirrels.

In addition RSNE have employed a full time Ranger, Ian, who has been working to the south and west of the Stronghold and has removed an additional 218 greys.

The Group have also been working with Karen Ramoo of Red Squirrel Southern Scotland and as you can see from the map above, Eric has been controlling in the area around Paxton.

4. RSNE Monitoring Project.

We have also been taking part in the RSNE Monitoring Project. This involves Placing feeders monitored by wildlife cameras in a variety of tetrads across our area. (See cameras on map above) These surveys take place over a 6 week period in the Spring and Autumn.

5. Landowners Engagement Day

Finally following the Training Day for Gamekeepers held in 2011 Karen and Emma organised a Landowners Engagement Day. It was an excellent day with 60 Landowners attending.

6. On 27th November, we set up a trail camera at Waren Mill Caravan Park where we had been advised of sighting of a 2 young red squirrels. On 29th November, Sheila Eric & Heather went back to pick up the camera and were fortunate to see 1 of the red squirrels at the squirrel feeders, the owners of the chalet are entranced with the antics of the squirrel and keeping it well fed. Sheila has volunteered to carrying on feeding whilst the Rogers are away over Christmas and into the New Year.

MERRY CHRISTMAS