



Save our Squirrels Berwick Group

Squirrel Times

March 2012

Hi All,

This is the first edition of our Group's newsletter. The idea is to produce it at irregular periods when we have something to say. That's not just me but anyone who wants to write something related to our Group or the squirrel world in general.

It was with great regret we received the news that Elizabeth felt she needed to resign from the Group due to personal reasons. She had both started and put a huge amount of energy into developing this Group into what it is today. She will be missed.

A Special General Meeting was held at Paxton on 29th February. A new committee was voted as follows:

Treasurer -	John Firth
Surveying & Monitoring -	John Rae
Controller -	Eric Wood
Secretary -	Heather Wood
Liaison with Wooler Group/RSNE/NRS	Mike Allport
Stock Control	Sheila March

The second piece of bad news is that there has been a confirmed case of the squirrelpoxvirus in a red squirrel found in the southern end of Shiellow woods near where the St Cuthbert's Way enters. It was found by Paddy Gill who lives in Shiellow Crag House in the middle of the wood. This was sent to the Veterinary Investigation Centre at Penrith for tests. On Thursday 25th February it was confirmed to have the parapoxvirus.

After advice over the following weekend -

All monitoring equipment was removed from the woods and disinfected.

47 live traps were placed throughout Shiellow woods.

This trapping was to eradicate any greys within Shiellow.

Also to remove any infected reds from the area to try to contain the infection.

After completion of trapping in Shiellow we will trap Detchant and Kettleburn followed by Killoe.

Identifying Squirrelpox virus

Red squirrels in the initial stages of onset appear lethargic and dopey with poor coordination. They may start to show signs of lesions and ulceration to exposed skin. If the squirrel is caught at this stage, it is possible to treat it successfully if it is taken to a vet.

Vets should make an informed decision whether to treat an infected squirrel depending on the likelihood of survival, and should contact RSNE for treatment protocol if necessary.

By the second week of onset, the squirrel develops swelling, ulceration and lesions on all areas of exposed skin; around its mouth, eyes, nose, paws and genitals. SQPV symptoms appear very similar to those of myxomatosis in rabbits (although the two actual diseases are not in anyway similar or related). At this stage of onset the squirrel is highly infectious. If all practicable efforts to trap or catch are unsuccessful, the animal should be quickly and humanely dispatched to prevent further discomfort and transmission of the disease to other squirrels.

Lesions and ulceration around: EYES, NOSE, MOUTH and also on all other areas of exposed skin.



For further information see <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~u02ojk8/Squirrelpox%20virus.html>

Over the last few months our Group have been having discussions with all of the landowners and managers of the woods that make up the Kyloe Red Squirrel Reserve and representatives of Red Squirrels Northern England. We have got agreement for a common management plan for red conservation throughout all of the reserve and some of the surrounding woods.

The basic plan is to have a programme of control throughout all of the woods to remove any grey squirrels presently in the woods followed by ongoing monitoring with monthly visits. Any sign of grey incursion shown by the monitoring will be followed by further control.

All of the landowners and managers have expressed how pleased they are with the work we have undertaken to date in the Reserve.

As stated earlier we are live trapping throughout Shiellow at the moment. When this is complete the plan is to put the traps into Detchant and Kettleburn Farm due to recent sightings of grey squirrels, followed by Kyloe woods. A separate contractor will trap Fenwick and Holburn woods in parallel with this.

Red Squirrels Northern England have completed the interviews for the post of full time Ranger (controller) for north Northumberland. No candidate selected so post being re-advertised.

Unfortunately because of the essential work we are doing in the Reserve due to the red with squirrel pox our organised woodland surveys have had to be postponed. However please let us know about any squirrel activity that you see on your walks etc. Attached with this newsletter are some notes on what squirrel signs to look for when you are out in the woods.

We have undertaken one training survey in Kyloe woods where there was a lot of evidence of squirrel feeding sign and dreys.



Checking a monitor/feeder box

Finding squirrel feeding sign

Finally

I have been experimenting with Google Maps plotting all the surveys, monitoring and control that was undertaken during 2011 together with the reported squirrel sightings for the same period.

The idea is to help to give us an overall picture of what is happening both to use for planning future work but also so everyone in the Group to be able to follow the work we are doing.

To see the work that we have undertaken goto

2011 <http://g.co/maps/c2eek>

and to date during 2012

2012 <http://g.co/maps/2yrp6>

We propose to regularly update the 2012 map and circulate it to all members.

Surveys

Group Surveys

21/2/12	Kyloe (Gate to Transect 4A	Large areas of fresh cones and dreys
21/2/12	Kyloe Transect 4A	Large areas of fresh cones and dreys

Informal Surveys

18/02/2012	Fenwick Woods	Fresh Feeding at south end of wood
18/02/2012	Kyloe Woods	Large areas of fresh cones
19/02/2012	Fenton Woods	Large areas of fresh cones
19/02/2012	Routin Lynn	No sign
19/02/2012	St Cuthber's Cave Woods	1 squirreled cone
28/02/2012	Ford Dean	Survey of dean behind castle. Small amount of fresh cones by scots pine stand. Other tree species not suitable
07/03/2012	Kemping Strip	Fresh feeding sign
07/03/2012	South Moor	Fresh feeding sign
07/03/2012	Routin Lynn	Fresh feeding sign
07/03/2012	Howdenbank Dean	Old feeding sign
07/03/2012	Mill Plantation	Feeding sign. 1 fresh cone
07/03/2012	Whinny Plantation	Nothing. Clear felled.
09/03/2012	Dovecrag Plantation	Fresh feeding sign & dreys
09/03/2012	Ford Moss	Fresh feeding sign & dreys

Control Status

Property	Status	
<u>Stronghold Woods</u>		
Kyloe	To Follow Detchant	
Shiellow	Ongoing trapping	No captures
Detchant	Ongoing trapping	1 Grey
Fenwick	Due to start trapping in March	
Holburn	Due to start trapping in March	
Kettleburn	Ongoing trapping	1 Grey
<u>Covered by RSNE Grant</u>		
Castle Heaton	Unknown	
East Newbeggin	Traps in garden - ongoing	
Longridge Towers	Ongoing trapping	
Melkington	Unknown	
Shellacres	Unknown	
St Cuthbert's Farm	Due to start trapping in March	
Tillmouth Farm (Common Plantation)	Traps in garden – ongoing Common Plantation trapping in February	1 Grey
Tillmouth Hotel	Trapping completed in Feb	No captures
Tiptoe	Trapping completed in Feb	12 Greys
Haggerston Caravan Park	On hold.	Trapping in adjacent woods
West Newbeggin	Ongoing trapping	
<u>Other Woods</u>		
Castle Hills	Traps in garden - ongoing	3 Greys
Chainbridge	Ongoing trapping	4 Greys
Kyloe Cottage Dene	Due to start trapping in March	
Lickar Dean	Due to start trapping in March	
Low Lynn	Ongoing Monitoring (no signs of greys)	
The Barns	Ongoing trapping	
The Mead	Ongoing trapping	5 Greys
West Kyloe	Due to start trapping in March	
Tweedhill	Ongoing trapping	