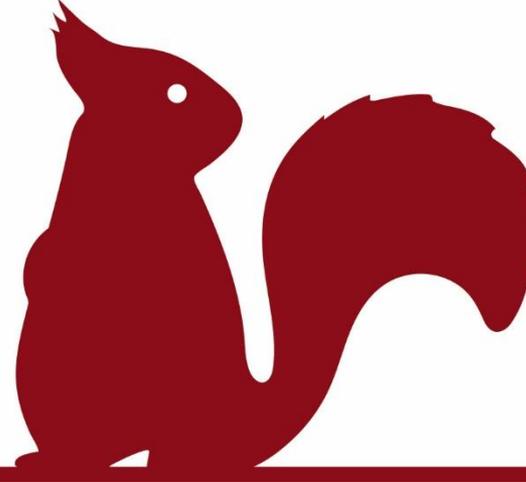




SAVING SCOTLAND'S RED SQUIRRELS



DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ACTION 2017-2022



Jim Wilson Photography

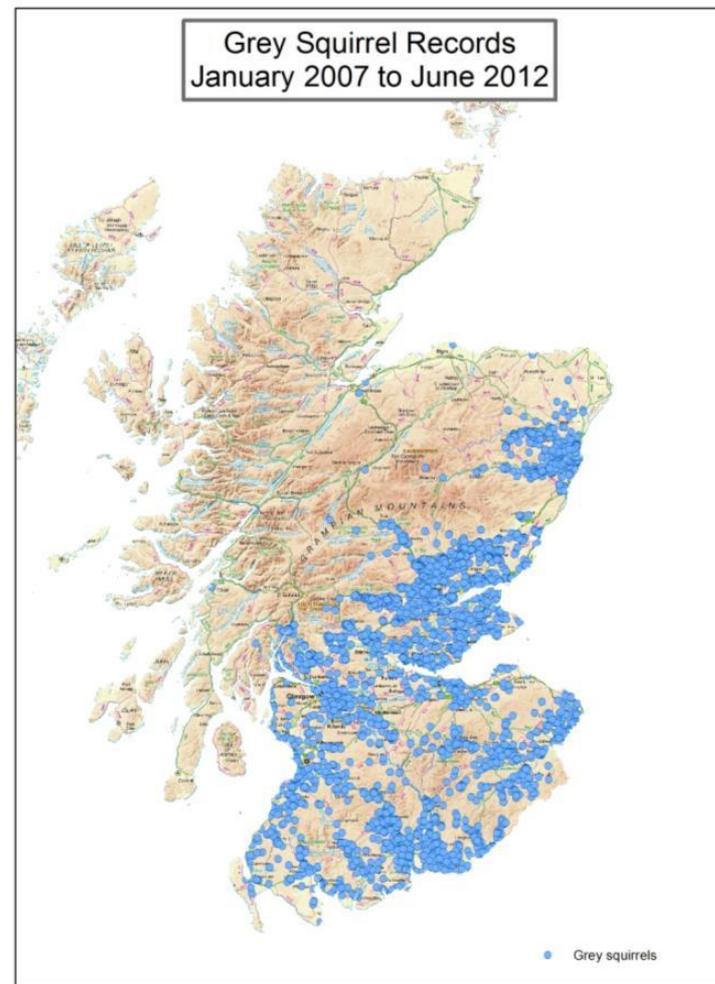
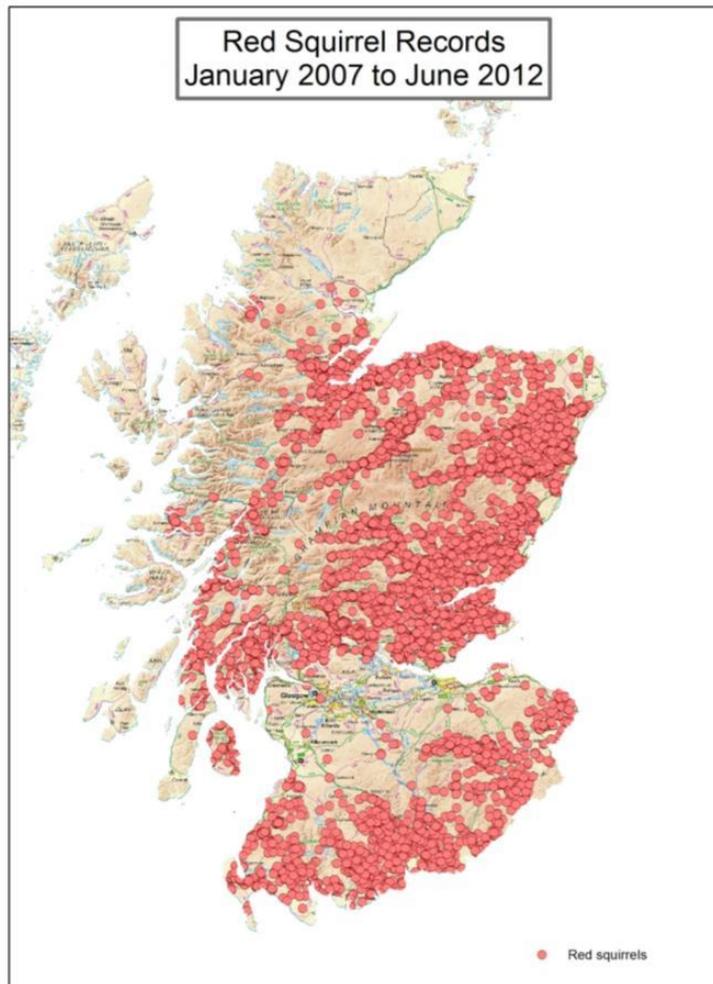
*Dr Mel Tonkin
Project Manager*

The red squirrel conservation problem in the UK



- 75% of the UK's red squirrels now found in Scotland
- Only mainland locations where reds are widely found without grey presence

Situation in Scotland at start of SSRS in 2009



Evolution of red squirrel conservation initiatives

- 1992 *The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development*
 - “the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit”: signatory nations agreed primary responsibility for stopping the losses of their own native biodiversity
- 1995 *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*
 - red squirrel identified as a priority species for conservation action
- 1998 *Scottish Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation*
- 2004 *Scottish Squirrel Survey*
 - Scottish Natural Heritage 3-year initiative
- 2006 *Scottish Red Squirrel Action Plan 2006-2011*
 - Scottish Government costed plan for action (FCS, SNH and SG)
- 2009 *SSRS Phase 1 launched*
 - based on work already done by local initiatives throughout Scotland

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels Partners

- Scottish Wildlife Trust - membership-based charitable partner
 - Delivery partner
 - Fundraising partner
- Scottish Natural Heritage - Statutory agency for nature
 - Funding partner
 - Red squirrel Species Action Plan joint Lead in Scotland
- Forestry Commission Scotland - Statutory agency regulating forestry
 - Funding partner
 - Red squirrel Species Action Plan joint Lead in Scotland
- Scottish Land & Estates - Landowner membership body
 - Voice of land-based businesses in rural Scotland
- RSPB Scotland - Membership-based charitable partner
 - Funding partner
- Red Squirrel Survival Trust - UK charity
 - specifically for red squirrels



Replacement mechanism

Most of Scotland

- Replacement of reds by competition for habitat / food
- Poor recruitment of young red squirrels
- Effects on fecundity of adult female reds by affecting nutritional status



Additional threat to the red squirrel in southern Scotland from 2005

- Disease – Squirrelpox virus disease : grey squirrel host



Strategic Aims of the Grey Squirrel Control programme

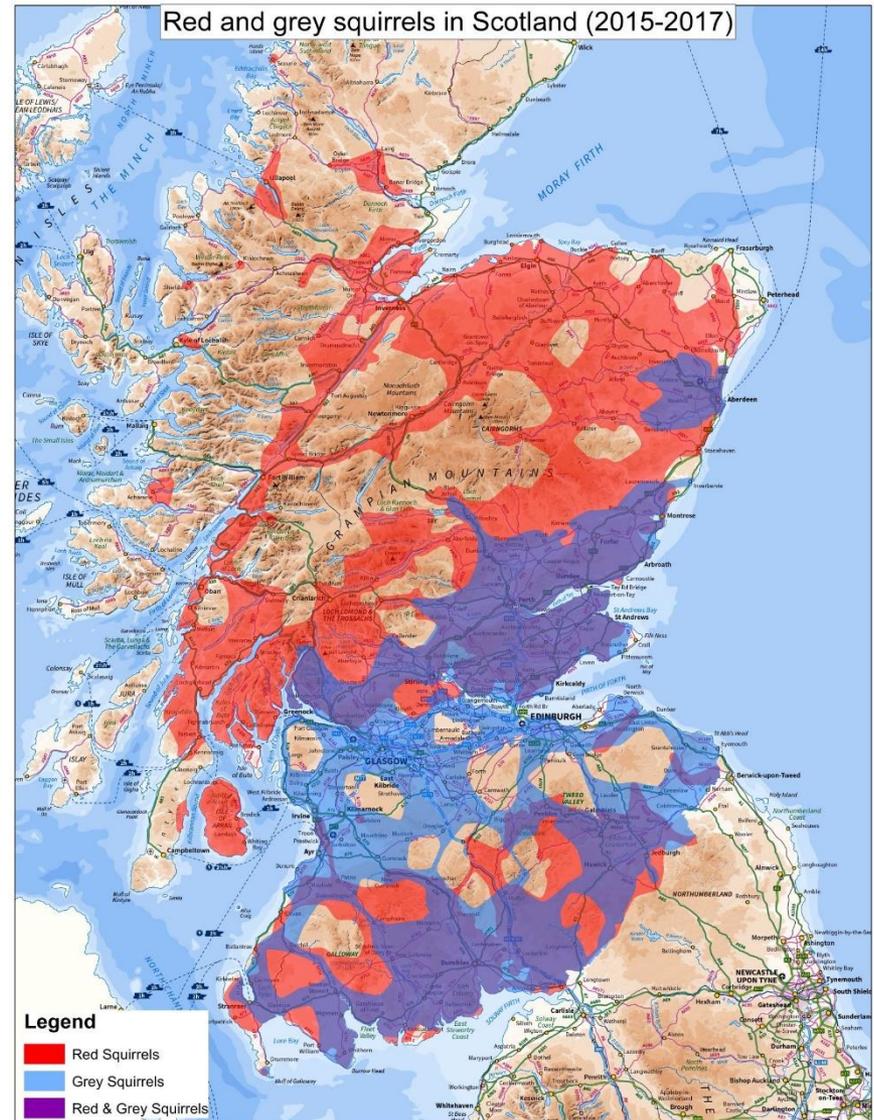
Two priorities:

1. Protect large red-only population north of the Highland Line
2. Support red squirrels in selected areas where greys also occur

Three different areas

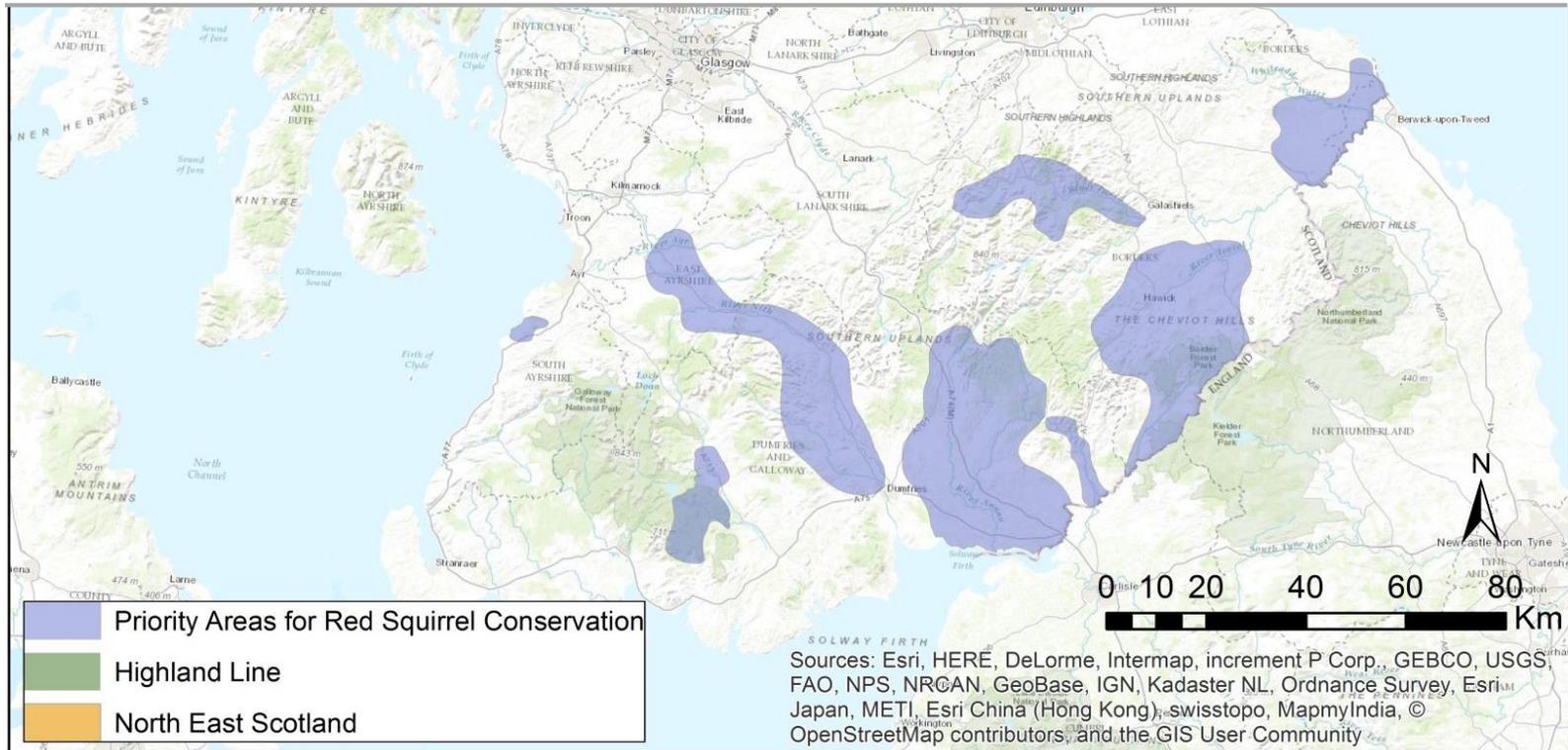
- each with a different regional aim

- North East Scotland
 - eradication
- Central Lowlands
 - Containment of northward spread into “red-only” zones
- Southern Scotland
 - Reducing grey squirrel densities to prevent replacement of reds in priority areas (control)



SSRS South Scotland initial priority project areas (subject to current review)

- Southern Scotland
 - Reducing grey squirrel densities to prevent replacement of reds in priority areas
 - Providing source of red squirrels for recolonisation of adjacent forest & woodland



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Harbourside House
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Edinburgh, EH6 6NF



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Grey squirrel control methodology

Live-trapping

- need to release red squirrels unharmed
- **labour intensive**

Monitoring

1. Analysis of trapping activity
 - effort – no. of traps + no. of days in use
 - Catch – no. of greys and no. of reds
2. Annual systematic presence/absence surveys
 - > 200 tetrads (2 x 2 Km-squares)
 - Squirrel hair-trap bait stations x4 per tetrad x 3 hair samples over 6 weeks
 - **Labour intensive**
3. Public sightings reporting online



Delivery of the grey squirrel control work

Co-ordinated grey squirrel control trapping across the strategically identified landscapes

- **Project staff**

 - 5 Conservation Officers
 - 6 full-time + 5 seasonal Grey Squirrel Control Officers

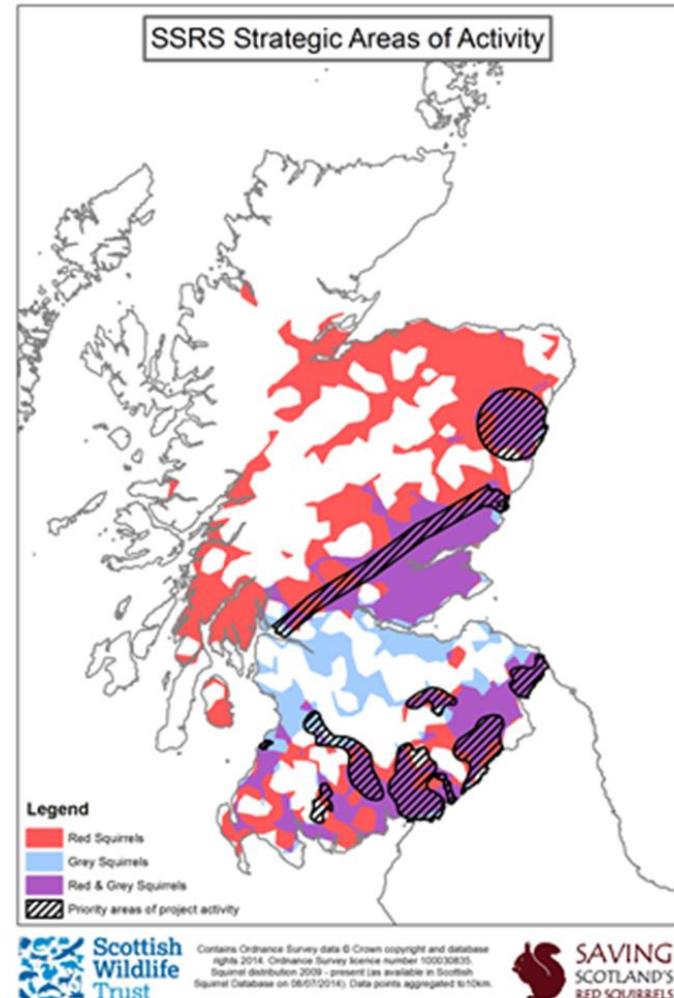
 - Trapping in key sites without other coverage

- **Landowners collaborating**

 - Up to 140 under 5-year Forest Grant Scheme funded contracts (92 current)

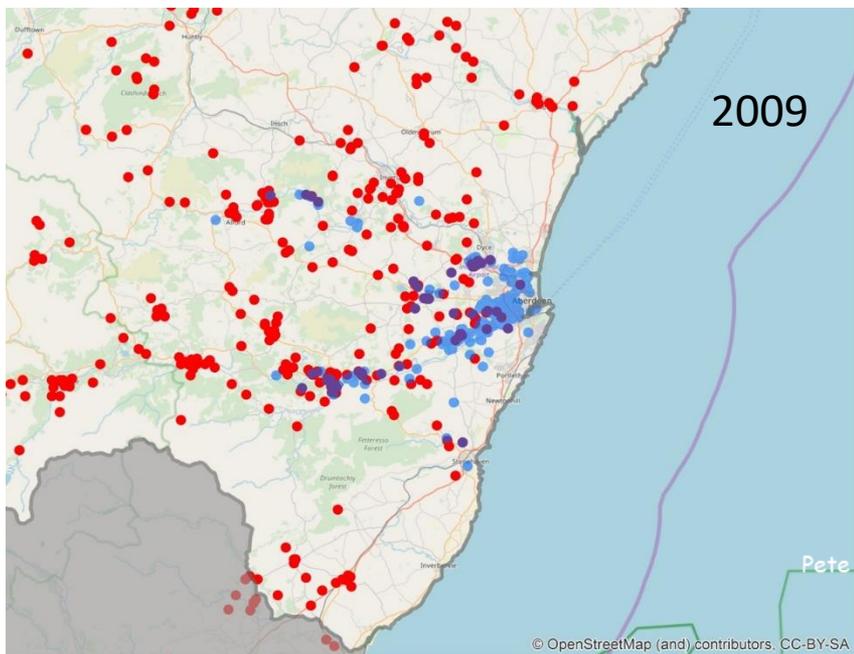
- **Project trap-loan scheme**

 - Up to 200+ landowners (82+ current)
 - Up to 500+ individuals (263+ current)



Crucial role of survey volunteers and landowner partners

Outcomes of work to date – North East



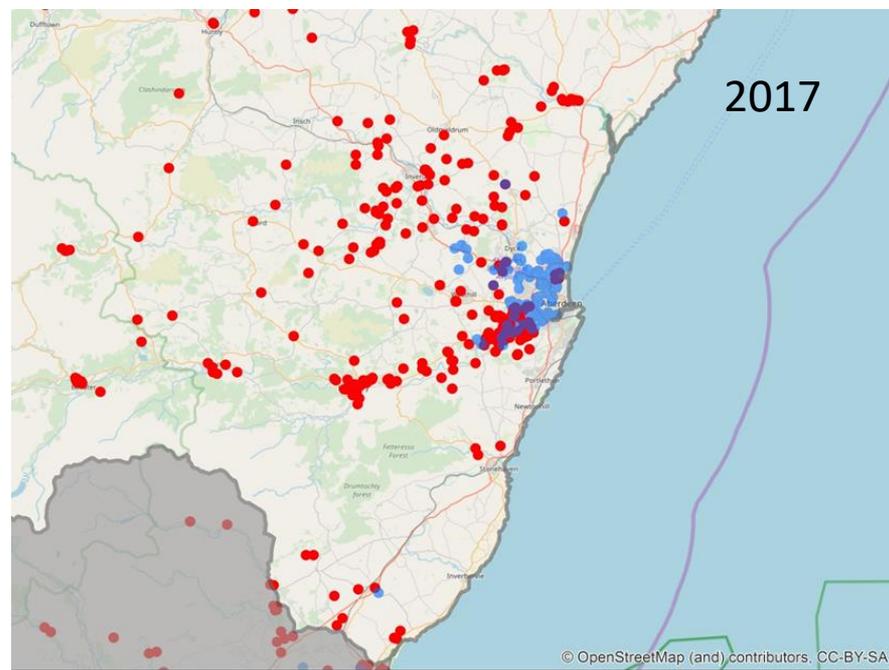
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- Grey Squirrel
- Grey and Red Squirrel
- Red Squirrel



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- Removal of grey squirrels from rural Aberdeenshire



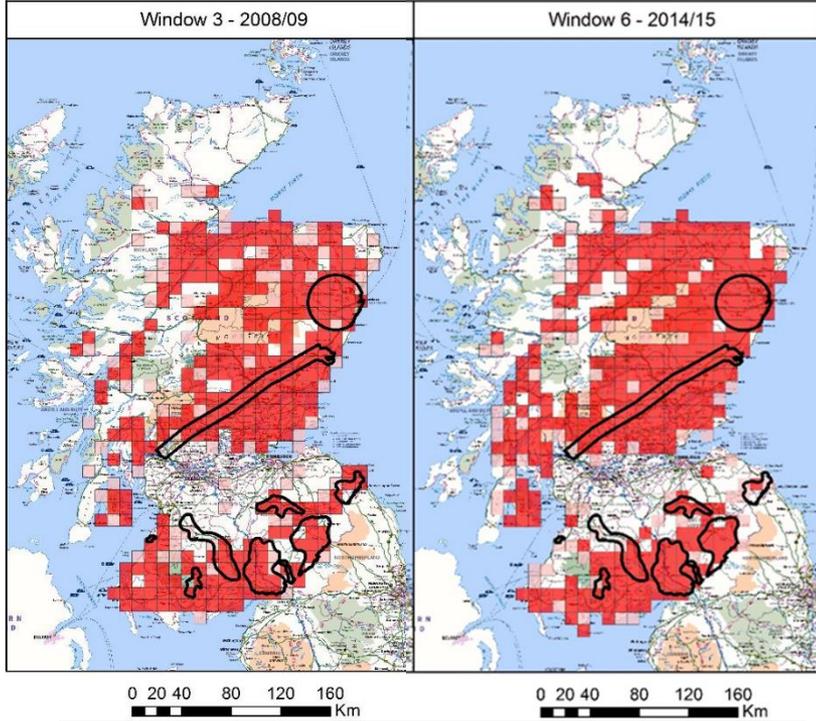
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- Grey Squirrel
- Grey and Red Squirrel
- Red Squirrel



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Outcomes of work to date – Central Lowlands

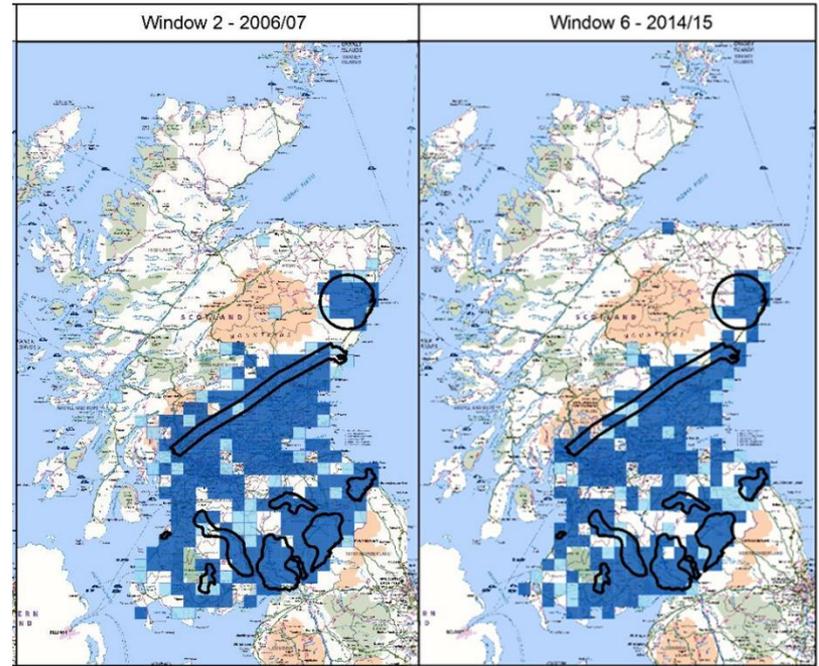


Distribution records: red squirrel range by 10km square

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- Red squirrel range maintained north of the Highland Line

Distribution records: grey squirrel range by 10km square



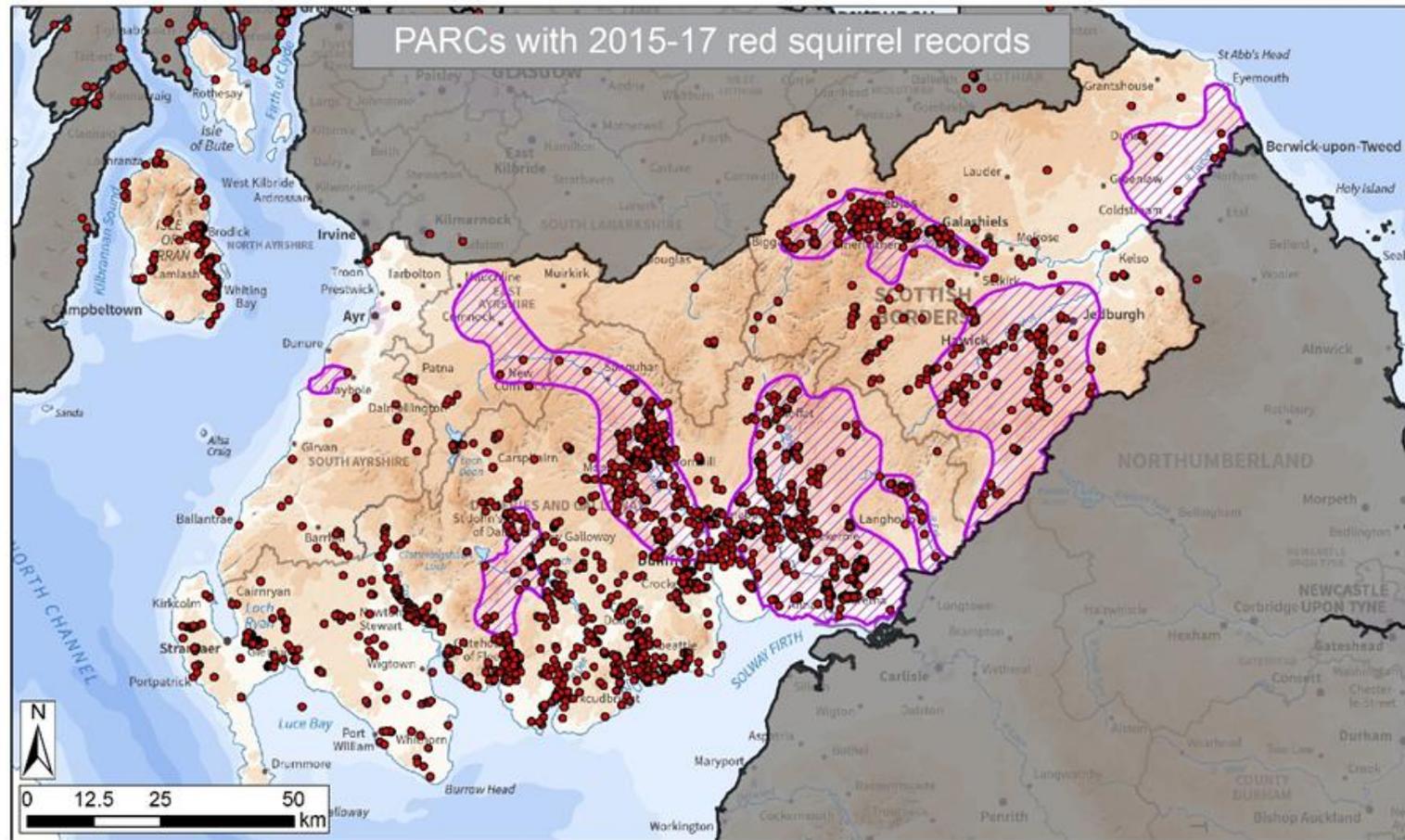
SSRS Control Target Area
 >1 grey squirrel record
 1 grey squirrel record

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Ordnance Survey licence number 100030835

- Reductions in grey squirrel range to the north of the Highland Line

Outcomes of work to date – South Scotland

- Red squirrels still thriving in most of the project's priority areas
- Despite the presence of squirrelox in the region's grey squirrel populations





SSRS – Developing Community Action

Vision:

“Red squirrels are thriving in South Scotland, the Highlands and Grampian, Argyll and northern Tayside/Stirling and have become a successful symbol of Scotland’s ongoing commitment to protecting wildlife for future generations.”

Aim:

To develop and implement a sustainable programme of red squirrel protection capable of securing the long-term survival of core red squirrel populations across Scotland.

How?

5-year Heritage Lottery-funded project (2017-2022)

Recruit and equip communities to take on a vital role in the long-term protection of red squirrels in key areas across the country, and maintained through a robust legacy strategy

Fostering a sense of local ownership and pride in role in red squirrel conservation

SSRS-DCA 2017-22: Aims

1. In Aberdeen City and Shire:

Need for intensive control anticipated to decrease over project period.
Develop a “rapid response methodology” to detect and respond to any remnant or resurgent populations to operate post-project

2. In the Central Lowlands:

Deliver strategic control of grey squirrels necessary to prevent their re-establishment north of the Highland Line, supported by engagement activities to generate public support and involvement.

3. In Southern Scotland:

Mobilise communities and landowners to act together to protect red squirrels in their local area

- focused on agreed project priority areas for red squirrel conservation
- encouraging action more widely.



SSRS-DCA 2017-22: Aims

- 1. Communications Plan:**
raise awareness of the wider community in Scotland of the threats to red squirrels and required conservation action
- 2. Community Engagement Plan:**
galvanise volunteer support
- 3. Training and mentoring:**
support individual volunteers and community red squirrel protection networks
- 4. Develop on-line Community Hub:**
data capture, training, support, feedback, and monitoring and evaluation of volunteer efforts
- 5. Develop interpretation and promotional materials:**
for use by staff and community networks



SSRS-DCA 2017-22: Aims

6. Establish new community networks:
enough to provide the required red squirrel conservation action – at least for the priority areas
7. Facilitate the sharing of learning and experience:
between individuals and groups
8. Coordinated grey squirrel control in the Project's priority areas:
via professional grey squirrel officers, local landowners and volunteers
9. Annual presence/absence surveys:
to monitor trends in distributions and occupancy of red and grey squirrels and inform project activities and measure impact

Local Network and Volunteer Group Directory

This Year's Sightings

Landscapescale community action is the key to the long-term survival of Scotland's red squirrels. The project is supporting red squirrel networks across our priority areas. The networks are led by enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers, working together to protect their local red squirrel populations.

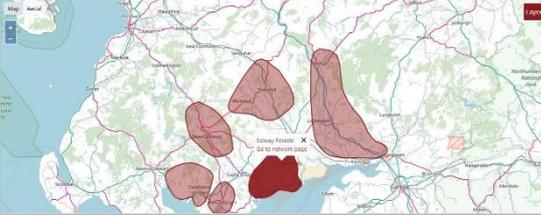
On the map, click on your area and choose 'Go to network page', or select from the list below:

Interested in forming a new network in your area? If you live in a priority area, Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels could help you get started. Please [contact us](#) to discuss.

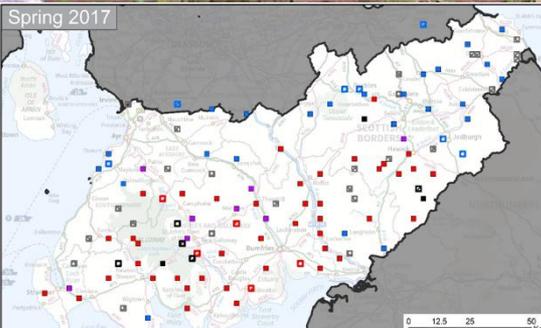
See 43 Total 71 Grey 25

[REPORT A SQUIRREL SIGHTING](#)

SRB



Spring 2017



Results from SSRS standardised tetrad surveys
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Survey licence number 100030835.
Date: 27/05/2017

Red squirrel(s)	Red squirrel(s) - Tetrad partially completed
Grey squirrel(s)	Grey squirrel(s) - Tetrad partially completed
Red/Grey squirrel(s)	Neither squirrel - Tetrad partially completed
Neither squirrel	Tetrad not surveyed

2022 and beyond: the legacy

- Well-trained Community Networks
- Community network support & training – continued grey squirrel control sufficient to protect project priority area red squirrels
- Online Community Hub for reporting and feeding back on community network control & monitoring activities
- Landowners supported to continue control under agri-environment contracts
- Monitoring and rapid response capacity for Aberdeen/shire
- Ongoing professional grey squirrel control along Highland Line
- Annual surveys – central co-ordination



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