

UPDATE REPORT ON SQUIRREL RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Collated from information presented at Country and UK Squirrel Groups and other meetings by Brenda Mayle (UKRSG Chairperson), Centre for Human and Ecological Sciences, Forest Research 07/06/11 Email: Brenda.mayle@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

News items

1. April 3rd -4th 2011 Confirmation of an outbreak of Squirrel Pox in Tollymore Forest, County Down, Northern Ireland. First SQPV in Northern Ireland. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-12935115>
2. J. Gurnell, P. Lurz, C. Breummer & A. Meredith are carrying out a 22-month study (Mar 2011-Dec 2012) entitled "Monitoring of squirrel populations at Foulshaw and Meathop Mosses" with funding from Cumbria Wildlife Trust. This will include using camera traps.
3. P. Lurz, J. Gurnell, with others, have collated 1990-2010 squirrel distribution records for the north of England and Scotland and hope to have some analyses completed within the next few months.
4. From Italy: Martinoli, A., Bertolino, S., Preatoni, D., Balduzzi, A., Marsan, A., Genovesi, P., Tosi, G. & Wauters, L. 2010: Headcount 2010: the multiplication of the grey squirrel populations introduced to Italy. *Hystrix* 21, 127-136.
5. LIFE+EC-SQUARE Project website now on-line. A partnership project for the conservation of the European Red squirrel, protecting the species from the competition of the introduced Eastern Grey squirrel www.life-ecsquare.eu (English language available).
6. A new Mammal Society booklet on squirrels will be published within the year (by P. Lurz, L. Wauters & J. Gurnell).
7. Five red squirrels have been found dead near Haltwhistle, Northumberland. Provisional tests on two of the animals found the cause of death was adenovirus. The others are being post-mortemed. *Cumberland News* 18/3/2011 (Page: 7).
8. Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) have worked to produce a joint agency statement on red squirrel conservation <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B829774.pdf>
9. Red Squirrels North England Project. Project Manager is Nick Mason from 18th April 2011. Craig Shuttleworth will continue to be involved with the project.
10. MSc's completed during 2010 in Northern Ireland:
 - Lara Wilson-McKee - An Investigation into the Public Perception on Control of Invasive Alien Species: Case study on the Grey Squirrel - Queen's University Belfast.
 - Claire Dunphy - Landscape favourability for Red and Grey Squirrels in Northern Ireland and Development of a draft Local Species Action Plan for the Red Squirrel in the Glens of Antrim - Queen's University Belfast / Quercus / NIEA.
 - Patrick O'Shea - 'An Exploration of the Food Preferences of Red Squirrels (*Sciurus vulgaris*) and Grey Squirrels (*S. carolinensis*) Feeding at Selective Supplementary Feeders'. – Queen's University Belfast.
11. Emma Sheehy NUI Galway PhD supervised by Colin Lawton "Recent anecdotal reports have linked a revival of red squirrel populations and a reduction in the range of grey squirrels, in certain midland counties of Ireland, with the resurgence of the pine marten. It has been suggested that the pine marten is preying on the introduced grey squirrel to a greater extent than the more nimble red squirrel. This projects aims to investigate the relationship between the three species, and identify the impact that the pine marten is having on squirrel dynamics in Ireland, if any. The work will feed into existing squirrel research in the Mammal Ecology group and inform conservation and management policies in Ireland and other parts of Europe. The initial stage of the project involves a survey of the three species in the counties in question. Further details at the project website <http://www.woodlandmammals.com/>