

English Woodland Grant Scheme

Operations Note 10b

1st June 2008

Management guidelines for Red squirrel reserve buffer zones in northern England

Purpose These guidelines have been written for landowners and managers with land in the buffer zone of a northern red squirrel reserve.

They will help land managers to understand the actions that need to be taken to help conserve the red squirrel. The guidance does not cover every aspect in detail and landowners are encouraged to seek advice specific on individual circumstances from the local Save our Squirrels Officer. This advice will seek to maximise the effectiveness of management actions whilst respecting other landscape and conservation interests.

Grant aid under the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) may be available to help with the costs of management and conservation work. Please contact the local Save Our Squirrels Officer for details.

Use These guidelines will form the basis for “good management practice” for the purposes of the relevant grants administered under the EWGS in the north of England. The Isle of Wight and The Poole Harbour Islands off the south coast are to be managed in accordance with the Local Biodiversity Action plan for this species.

Operations Note 010a covers good management within the Red squirrel reserves.

Support The primary FC contact on Red squirrel conservation in northern England is Richard Pow. Save Our Squirrels and FC contact details along with a location map of the reserves is at the end of this Note.

Further Advice The EWGS website www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs contains all the information needed to apply for grant support. If you do not have access to the internet, you can request any of the information from your local Forestry Commission office.

We recommend getting professional advice on woodland management and grants. A list of national and regional professional organisations is available at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-advice or from your local FC office.

Versions Version 1.0 issued June 2007

Version 1.1 issued 1st June 2008 – minor change to header

Management Guidelines for Red Squirrel Reserve Buffer Zones in Northern England

Introduction

The red squirrel is declining in England and is a priority species for conservation identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. In an attempt to prevent the extinction of the species in England, 16 forests in Northern England will be managed as red squirrel reserves. Each of these reserves is ringed by a buffer zone that is approximately 5km wide. The buffer zone is an area where we will seek to maintain red squirrels in the wider landscape and also deter grey squirrels from establishing and threatening the red squirrel reserves. A buffer zone map has been produced for each reserve. If you manage land in a buffer zone you have an important part to play in the conservation of red squirrels as the persistence of red squirrel populations in the reserves depends, in part, on land management practices and other activities in the buffer zones. All land managers in the buffer zones are encouraged to support red squirrel conservation by following these guidelines.

Land Management

Land in the buffer zones, whether it be farm land or woodland, should be managed to maintain or improve habitat quality for red squirrels without improving habitat quality for grey squirrels. This means that:

- The planting of new large seeded broadleaved woodland such as that composed of oak and beech, is strongly discouraged as this will encourage grey squirrels. In particular, avoid creating such woodland where it is likely to provide an incursion corridor for greys from a buffer zone, or land outwith it, to a reserve.
- An exception to the above is enlargement of ancient and semi-natural oak woodland as this is often desirable for a range of landscape and conservation reasons. However, any such extensions should be limited so as to achieve not more than a 10% increase in large seeded broadleaved woodland in the buffer zone over any 10 year period and enhancement of potential grey squirrel incursion corridors should be avoided.
- In restoring plantations on ancient woodland sites to a native woodland type, do not plant more than 5% large seeded broadleaves, as these will encourage grey squirrels.
- Manage woodland/forests in ways that sustain a continuous red squirrel food supply, e.g. ensure that there is a mix of conifer species and that there are always trees of seed bearing age present.
- Seek to avoid felling trees where reds are present and whilst dreys are occupied by young (March – October) where this is likely to significantly impact on the local red squirrel population.

Grey Squirrel Control

For the red squirrel to survive in northern England it is essential that land managers in the buffer zones undertake, or allow, an appropriate level of well-targeted grey squirrel control. This should be focussed on wooded corridors where grey control is most needed to prevent or reduce the incursion of grey squirrels to the reserves. Advice on grey squirrel control best practice and information on training, if this is required, is available from your Save our Squirrels Officer. There is a trap loan scheme that you may like to take advantage of.

- Undertake an appropriate level of well-targeted grey control (using best practice methods) focussing on the dispersal corridors such as wooded river valleys where grey squirrel incursion is likely to start and where trapping is likely to be most productive.

Sightings and Monitoring

Monitoring of red and grey squirrel populations is essential if the effectiveness of conservation work is to be understood.

- Allow, and where possible and appropriate, assist in red and grey squirrel monitoring work.
- Report all new sightings of red and grey squirrels to Save our Squirrels Tel 0845 3479375.
- It is particularly important that you report sightings of dead red squirrels or those with disease symptoms resembling myxomatosis as this could be squirrel pox virus disease. If you come across a red squirrel carcass, please contact your Save Our Squirrels officer as they may wish for it to be sent away for blood tests and post mortem.

Supplementary Feeding

- Supplementary feeding is a useful means of drawing squirrels to a known location to increase the likelihood of sightings. Generally, it is not thought to be a necessary or useful means of sustaining red squirrel populations. If considering supplementary feeding please follow these rules and obtain advice from your Save Our Squirrels officer.
- Stop feeding immediately if grey squirrels appear locally.
- Stop feeding immediately if squirrel pox virus is identified in the local squirrel population.
- Ensure proper, regular cleaning of feeders using disinfectant to reduce risk of disease transmission.
- Only use a recommended seed mix and locate feeders appropriately

Public Enjoyment and Involvement

There is considerable public interest in red squirrels. We encourage you to play an active part in the conservation of this cherished species and where possible involve the public in this to increase their understanding, awareness and enjoyment of this beloved character of British wildlife. There may be a local group of volunteers that you can join or work with on your land. Please contact your Red Alert Officer for further information and advice.

Useful contacts for information on grants and further advice

The Northumberland Wildlife Trust offers advice on Red squirrel management for all of the reserves in Northern England. Contact the Save Our Squirrels Officer at Northumberland Wildlife Trust on 0191 284 6884 or contact at www.saveoursquirrels.org.uk

For information about the English Woodland Grant Scheme see www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs

Or contact the Forestry Commission

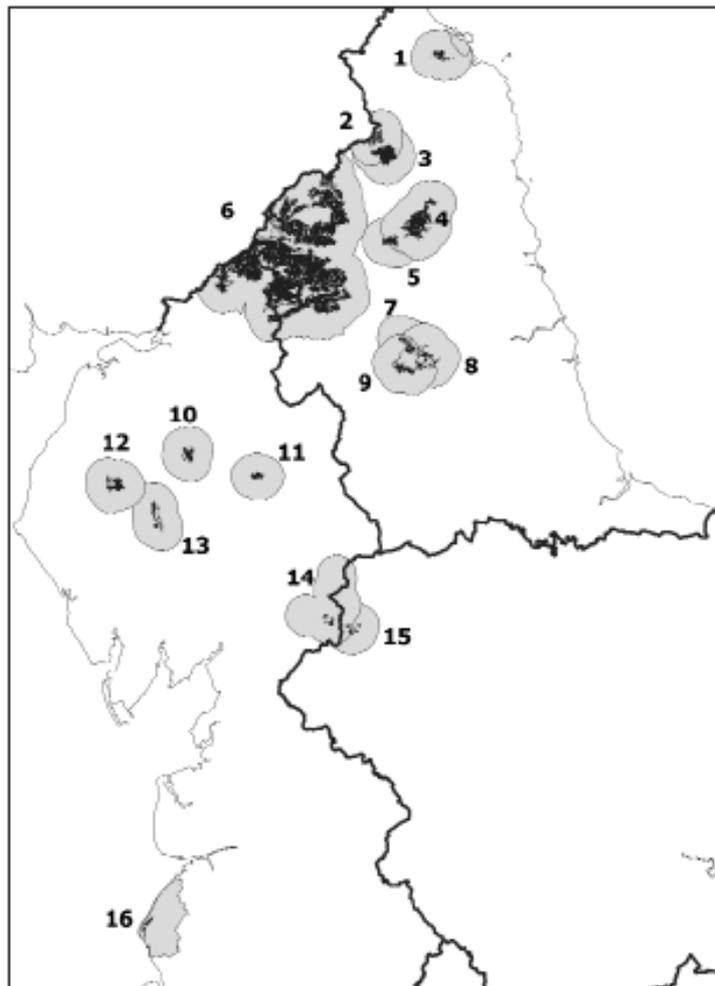
North East England on 01669 621591

North West England on 017687 76616

Yorkshire & The Humber on 01904 448778.

Red Squirrel Reserves (and buffer zones) in the North of England

1. Kylee
2. Uswayford
3. Kidland
4. Harwood
5. Raylees
6. Kielder
7. Dipton/Dukeshouse Wood
8. Healy/Kellas
9. Slaley/Dukesfield
10. Greystoke
11. Whinfall
12. Whinlatter
13. Thirlmere
14. Garsdale/Mallerstang
15. Whiddale
16. Sefton



For the Isle of Wight contact [South East England Conservancy](#)

For the Poole Harbour islands contact [South West England Conservancy](#)