

ARSG Update

Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group SSG Report September 2011

Sightings and Surveys

- Sightings collection and collation ongoing.
- Pox testing ongoing.
- Glasgow University student volunteers carrying out surveys in woodlands in South and East Ayrshire.
- Red squirrels are being sighted again in Cumnock and New Cumnock. Also unconfirmed sightings of reds in Ayr town centre. A survey is underway to investigate.

Grey Squirrel Control

- Working with several local communities to secure funding from windfarms and landfill for localised grey control.
- Grey control continues through our trap loan scheme and volunteer GSCOs. Several large donations have helped us to match fund small grants.
- Ongoing liaison with RSSS GSCO working in East Ayrshire.
- Fundraising for a Western GSCO ongoing.
- Grey control work by EAW at Dumfries House has ceased. SRDP applications made to try and re-instate grey control.

Education and Promotion

- A few events attended this summer. Attendance at events has been scaled back due to a lack of volunteers able to man stalls.
- Events planned for red squirrel week in October.
- Newsletter ready for publication this autumn.
- A further 2 interpretation panels to be installed in South Ayrshire.
- The website review was delayed but should be complete by Christmas.
- Promoting sightings and red squirrel conservation through the eco-schools programme.

Other

- Membership remains high but volunteer support is low. We are developing social media tools to try and explore alternative ways of recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- Sero-positive grey squirrel caught in Newton Stewart demonstrates the probability that sero-positive grey squirrels will move into South Ayrshire if control work does not occur.