



FEORAGAN RUADH NA GAIDHEALTACHD **Update**

Scottish Squirrel Group
September 2011

Strongholds

Guidance is in production. Pilot sites are underway, Julia Garritt to update the meeting.

Grey squirrel news

No further records since Skye in December 2010. Plan to set up network of grey squirrel 'panic bags' around the Highlands to be used if necessary by FCS staff. These will consist of guidance on how to deal with a grey squirrel record and equipment to monitor the site in question and how to use a trap if the record is verified.

Dundonnell translocation

This is a summary of the recent project report, published in August 2011 by Roy Dennis – “Red squirrels have been restored to woodlands at Dundonnell in Wester Ross. The founding population of 44 squirrels was live-trapped in Moray and Strathspey, by Roy Dennis (Highland Foundation for Wildlife) under a SNH licence. Breeding occurred in 2009, 2010 and 2011. The present population is now estimated at between 240 and 360 squirrels. A small number dispersed to the Lael to Leckmelm woodlands, where breeding is also occurring.” This report is available from Juliet – let me know if you would like a copy.

Funding

This project will end in June 2012. Awaiting news of UKRSG efforts in seeking funding for a UK red squirrel project.

Lead volunteers

We now have a full complement of 6 lead volunteers. They are located around the Highlands and their main task will be to be the main local red squirrel contact within their region. We are having a training day for them in October so that we can decide on their current role and how it might change beyond the lifetime of the red squirrels of the Highlands project.

They are:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Heather Bantick | Badenoch & Strathspey (north) |
| 2. Wayne Fitter | Badnoch & Strathspey (south) |
| 3. Ron Bury | Inverness-shire |
| 4. Sue Tarr | Ross-shire |
| 5. Karen Reid | Caithness & Sutherland |
| 6. Chris Clifford | Lochaber |

Website www.redsquirrelsofthehighlands.co.uk

The blog continues to be especially popular – especially the recent film clips of hot spot sites, have a look for yourself! We require funding to keep the website going - £1000 a year for hosting. Any offers or suggestions of funding gratefully received! I have added a link to the new NBN squirrel record page.

Hot spots

This is a key part of the legacy of the project. These new hot spots and lead volunteers will keep the profile of red squirrels in the Highlands high. A new leaflet showing locations of these hot spots, 12 in total is currently in production. This will allow visitors and locals alike to locate places where they are likely to see squirrels feeding on feeders. I will send out the new leaflets to SSG members once they are printed in December 2011. The aim is to have the following facilities at each site where possible:

- Car parking
- All ability trail to feeders
- Several feeders which are topped up by local enthusiasts
- Viewing screen with spy holes at a range of heights.

See photos below taken at Glenrigh hot spot, Lochaber:



Hot spot viewing screen at Glenrigh



Hard work all this feeding! Glenrigh hot spot.

WildBritain, ITV with Ray Mears

Series starting 16 September on ITV – including red squirrel episode at Abernethy Forest.

Juliet Robinson
30 August 2011