

Red Squirrels in South Scotland Project Update

96 landowners have been successfully recruited onto SRDP and are receiving funding for grey squirrel control. Further landowners across southern Scotland have been identified for recruitment and applications are currently being prepared.

The last 6 months has seen an increase in the number and distribution of seropositive grey squirrels (Map 1). In October 2011 seropositive grey squirrels were found to be present at Mauchline in east Ayrshire. In response to this, SWT employed a temporary control officer and further positive grey squirrels have since been detected at Culzean Country Park, Stair, Galston, Coylton and Irvine. Control and sampling in the area remains ongoing.

Further seropositive grey squirrels have also been found at Newton Stewart and at 'The Marches' south of Wigtown.

In the Scottish Borders seropositive grey squirrels have moved north along the Blackadder and Whiteadder Waters and have been found present in Duns. A temporary control officer has been employed by SWT and further control and sampling work is underway to ascertain how far north these grey squirrels have moved.

In December 2011 a new red squirrel pox outbreak occurred along the River Tweed at Paxton House in Berwickshire. To date 2 poxed red squirrels have been found (1 confirmed case). Unfortunately since the outbreak, the properties red squirrel population has disappeared with no red squirrel sightings since January. Grey squirrel captures at Paxton House and neighbouring estates remain low.

Map 1: Distribution of seropositive greys in south Scotland 2007 to January 2012

