

## SSRS Summary for Scottish Squirrel Group

12 September 2012

### 1. Budget Status

For Phase 2 of SSRS:

Projected 2-year budget	£1,000,000 approx
SNH contribution	£350,000
SWT contribution	£100,000
Other income received	£360,000
Still to raise	£190,000

Still some applications to charitable bodies outstanding, plus ongoing campaigns to raise funds from SWT members and the general public.

### 2. Staffing

- North East: 1F/T PO, 2F/T GSCOs.
- Tayside: 1F/T PO + 4 seasonal GSCOs
- Argyll & Trossachs: 0.7 PO + seasonal GSCO.
- South Scotland: 2 PO + 4 F/T GSCOs.
- New Data and Survey Officer (0.6) responsible for the collation and management of the SSRS Project's many streams of data, co-ordinating the project's 2013 surveys.

### 3. Project Surveys

- We repeated the spring tetrad presence/absence surveys this year. Of 112 tetrads set up, staff and volunteers completed 96. We could compare the findings of 42 of these with results at the same sites in Spring 2011 and 78 of them with results from Autumn 2011.
- Interesting findings included some regaining of range by grey squirrels since autumn 2011: 6 autumn "red-only" tetrads regained grey squirrels by this spring and 3 where both occurred in autumn had only greys detected this spring. Nevertheless, the overall trend from autumn to spring was in favour of red squirrels: 15 tetrads became "red-only" and 9 gained reds.
- When we compared this spring's surveys with spring 2011, the change in favour of reds was proportionally much greater, although we had a smaller sample to compare between the 2 periods: 7 gained reds and 9 became "red-only", whereas only 1 square gained greys over the year Spring 2011 to Spring 2012.
- We also repeated a number of standardised sightings transect counts: here there was no consistent trend between sites, even where those sites were closely linked. Counts appeared to be almost entirely site-dependent. However, we could identify sites where the count was consistently high for red squirrels, or consistently lacking in red squirrels, so the counts appear useful for comparing sites.
- A brief report of the surveys intended for feedback to volunteer surveyors has just been completed. Once signed off by the SSRS Steering Group, the report will be downloadable from the SSRS website [www.scottishsquirrels.org.uk](http://www.scottishsquirrels.org.uk).

### 4. Trapping

- Project staff have been trapping throughout the summer in all project areas. Analysis of the trapping figures has not yet been done, but the subjective impression is of grey squirrel numbers being well down this year. There are anecdotal accounts that this is true more widely than just the Project areas.
- SRDP: 17 estates in A&T; 41 in Tayside; 11 in Grampian; 90 in South Scotland; 159 in total. 35 applications went in this year's RPAC in March. (17 in Tayside, 4 in A&T, 14 in South Scotland).

## 5. Squirrelpox

- An extended squirrelpox monitoring plan was developed, to gather SQPV blood-test results from grey squirrels taken from 75 sample locations right across their current range in Scotland, including Fife. Sampling is not yet complete, but so far we have not found SQPV north of Mauchline in Ayrshire.
- We have drawn up a Squirrelpox contingency plan of action in the event that SQPV moves into the Central Belt of Scotland. Much of the current emphasis on pox containment in South Scotland, would inevitably move northwards, and therefore a redeployment of SSRS resources would ensue, with greater capacity for grey squirrel control north of Edinburgh-Glasgow than at present. It would involve extending Lewis's sphere of action southwards to the outskirts of Glasgow, and Ken's would include Clackmannanshire and Kinross.
- In the south east of Scotland SQPV continues to move through the landscape faster than we can check it. It has now reached Lauder and Stow (north of Galashiels, with just the Lammermuirs and Moorfoots between there and Dalkeith, just outside of Edinburgh).

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