



Penrith and District Red Squirrels Project Update 2016

Thank you for your support for Penrith and District Red Squirrels.

The Group was delighted that in 2016 they were able to continue to have red squirrel ranger cover across the whole of their areas of operation (1,738 square kilometres) by funding the engagement of three full-time and two part-time squirrel rangers. These rangers undertook the control of grey squirrels across the Penrith and District area, creating safe havens for red squirrels.

The only ranger to report a significant loss of red squirrels due to the squirrel pox virus was in the Whinfell sector, with other rangers reporting reds returning to areas where they had been pushed out by greys or noting more activity in areas where reds were already established.

The Group also continued to support and strengthen their network of coordinators and volunteers throughout the area of operation, including Northern Eden Valley, Whinfell, Upper Eden valley, Greystoke and Ullswater.

They promoted red squirrel conservation by organising and carrying out a number of public engagement activities – public meetings, giving talks, attending local shows and events – to highlight the current plight of the red squirrel and the risk to their existence posed by the non-native grey squirrel. These activities were publicised by press releases, newsletter, e-mail and website ... all of which needed resources and funding.

Evidence of success lies in the statistics! By September 2016, reported sightings of red squirrels showed an outstanding 32% increase against the same period in 2015. Over the same period, grey squirrel sightings showed a decrease of 24%.

Looking ahead, the Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group intends to build on its successful strategy of engaging dedicated rangers to secure more safe havens for our native red squirrels in the Penrith and District areas.

Thank you again for your amazing support!

