

PENRITH & DISTRICT RED SQUIRREL GROUP

Spring 2020 Newsletter



www.penrithredsquirrels.org.uk



Welcome to our spring 2020 Newsletter.

As I write this, we are in the throes of the terrible Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown that has been put in place to prevent its spread. It seems hard to imagine life returning to normal at times, but it will. When is a very different matter. We have a very long way to go and every aspect of our world is affected.



Very sadly, one of our great supporters, David Hodgkiss has died as a result of Covid 19. Our thoughts are very much with his wife Shirley and his family, and all who have lost loved ones.



I am very conscious that we have to try and maintain our red squirrel conservation effort despite it all. We finally received clearance for our ranger contractors to continue with their valuable work and I am extremely grateful to them for their unstinting effort on behalf of our charity. This is especially relevant this year when grey squirrels, on the back of an excellent natural food year, have bred very successfully. Reds have too, thank heavens.

The north Eden valley area has become very challenging with an influx of grey squirrels. Forestry England policy presents us with a very challenging and almost impossible difficulty in controlling grey numbers, particularly in High Stand plantation which is owned by them. We will continue to lobby for a change in their non-shooting policy as it is seriously compromising our red squirrel conservation/grey squirrel management work in this woodland of 250 hectares.

For General Enquiries Contact Julie Bailey

P&DRSG Administrator/Treasurer on 07788 264571 or info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group. Woodside, Armathwaite, Cumbria CA4 9SX
Registered Charity No: 1117418

CHAIRMAN LETTER CONT'D

My last newsletter included a piece about the squirrel pox carried by greys and the devastating effect this virus has on our red squirrels. Thank you to everyone that suspended feeding to try and help bring this under control. Hopefully we achieved this, but in some areas the red population is much reduced and we have already had one or two minor outbreaks this year elsewhere.

Our ranger team helped by a number of volunteers – we always need more – is very stretched and providing landscape cover of our 650 square miles of Cumbria is an enormous challenge. This would be hard enough in a flat landscape but given our topography over much of the area and the nature of the mixed woodland particularly along the river Eden valley, it is a great deal more difficult. We would love to increase the number of contractors doing this work but funding constraints simply do not allow this. Every penny raised, apart from a small amount to cover administration, is spent directly on red squirrel conservation work in the woods. We rely heavily on local people acting as our eyes and ears and I encourage everyone to report both grey and red sightings.

Plans for future events, meetings, our Annual public meeting, fundraising and talks are all on hold as we pray for the end of the Coronavirus outbreak. This is undoubtedly going to affect our financial position and I appeal to each and every one of you reading this to help in any way you can.

Please stay safe and well.

Robert Benson - Chairman



UPDATES FROM THE RANGERS

Gary Murphy (P&DRSG Ranger) - Upper Eden Valley:

A good start to the year with lots of red sightings especially in the Appleby, Kirkby Stephen area with about 100 reds seen. Reds are being seen in new areas and returning to old areas. Please let me know if you see reds in your garden or on your travels. I have caught up with quite a few greys and I'm very grateful for all eyes and ears as it is so important to report greys as soon as possible. You can help by joining Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group.

Justin Grice (P&DRSG Ranger) - Ullswater:

It has been a good winter for the reds in the Ullswater & Haweswater valleys. The abundance of natural food available has kept them busy foraging and not using feeders as much. I've still been supplementary feeding in the soft wood plantations and seeing big numbers of red squirrels in these woodlands. Grey squirrel numbers are extremely low but please do get in touch with any grey sightings as there will always be an odd grey moving into the area. Also a big thank you to all the landowners, volunteers and the public for their continued support on behalf of Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group.

Jerry Moss (Center Parcs Ranger & P&DRSG Trustee) - Whinfell Forest, Penrith:

The autumn brought us a very good natural crop from the hazel, beech and oak. Getting reds or greys to feeders proved nigh on impossible. Whinfell forest is seeing a steady increase of red numbers I am pleased to say and on many occasions whilst I was monitoring an area of the wood at Whinfell I would regularly see 15 plus reds in as little as an hour as they went about their business foraging on the beech mast. In the Lowther valley I am still seeing reds which is good after the Pox virus outbreak of last year.

John Lisle (P&DRSG Ranger) - Northern Eden Valley:

Once again both reds and greys have done really well over the winter; I am seeing quite a few healthy reds around which is encouraging. Unfortunately greys have had a good season too and I am seeing quite a few in the Eden Valley. In order for us to catch up with as many as possible Jerry has been covering Eden Lacey and Justin has been helping around Staffield and Low House which has taken the pressure off and allowed me to catch up elsewhere. Trapping is now underway and I am having a bit of success as the greys start to get hungry; they are trapping well so far. Once again I would like to thank all my volunteers and landowners for their help and cooperation over the year.

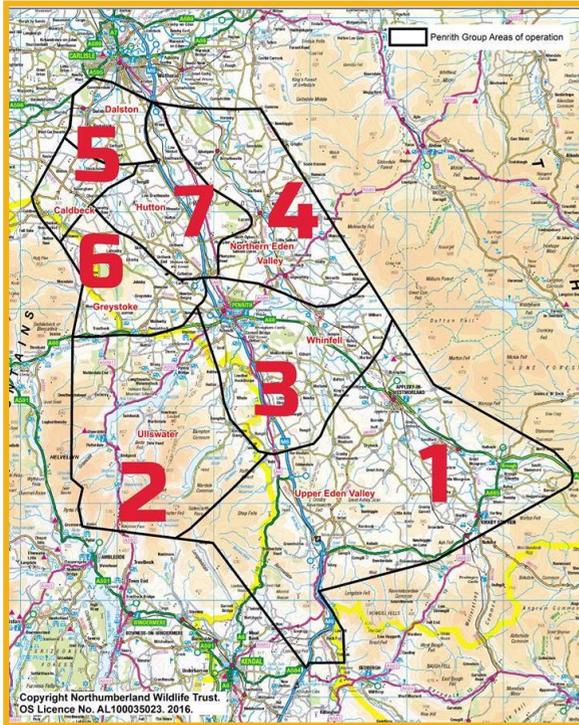
David Cowen (P&DRSG Ranger) - Dalston/Caldbeck:

I'm pleased to report, that my team of helpers are largely intact and have contributed greatly to both monitoring and controlling squirrels in my area of influence since the last newsletter. There is continued confidence that red distribution is being sustained and expanding modestly with more reports of reds appearing in new areas. Being close to Carlisle, there is a concern that on the Northern boundary we are vulnerable to on-going grey insurgency along the river valleys in particular. I would like to put on record my gratitude for the continued cooperation of woodland owners who allow me access.

Shaun Edmondson (P&DRSG Ranger) - Hutton:

After controlling a large number of greys in autumn 2019 things are looking good so far this year with good numbers of red squirrels turning up and getting established in new areas. I am confident despite the constant awful weather over the winter that the reds have been consistently seen using feeders and are thriving in a lot of areas. It is very important that people keep a close eye out and report sightings of both species; this way I can act quickly rather than too late. Thanks to everybody involved.

WHO TO CONTACT

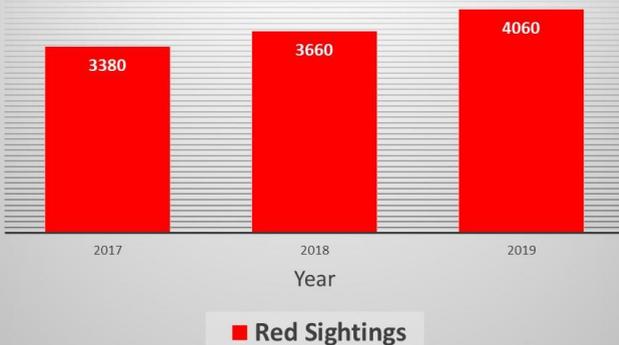


TO REPORT ANY SQUIRREL SIGHTINGS
PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:

1. GARY | 07974 788434 | garymurphy24red@gmail.com
2. JUSTIN | 07739 655601 |
3. JERRY | 07736 779965 | jmossjerry@aol.com
4. JOHN | 07841 449648 | john.lisle@btinternet.com
5. DAVID | 07542 191865 |
6. MATTHEW | 07949 366334 | matthew.stuart@rsne.org.uk
7. SHAUN | 07522 699265 | rosiese1990@icloud.com

For reports outside of P&DRSG area please contact
www.northernredsquirrels.org.uk

P&DRSG Stats 2017 - 2019
(n = 11,100 Red sightings)



**P&DRSG Red Squirrel
Sightings Reports.**

2017 - 2018 = up 8%

2018 - 2019 = up 11%

A VIEW IN THE WOODS

A view in the woods.

I have been fortunate enough to have had the loan of some interesting binoculars from Viking Optical. Whilst I was at Leighton Moss RSPB reserve on a day off, I noticed a pair of the Viking scout 12X30 Image Stabilised Binoculars in their cabinet in the shop. I have heard of image stabilised bins before but had never tried a pair.

One of the guys in the shop let me have a look at their display pair and I was impressed. But like most things binoculars need properly trying out in a live situation, so I emailed Viking to ask if it was at all possible to have a loan pair for a few weeks. They replied the very next day and offered to send me a pair out.

The binoculars I use have a magnification of 8x and I was worried that 12x would be too much in a woodland situation. This was not the case and after a few hours of use I saw the advantage of the 12x mag. however this would not be the case if the image was not stabilised. An un-stabilised image is virtually impossible to follow and very shaky but with a flick of the switch, the view is completely transformed and with top quality glass with multicoated lenses, you certainly get a perfectly clear view.

I would like to thank Viking Optical for giving me the opportunity to try out the Scouts. For more details on the range of optics from Viking please visit their website.

www.vikingoptical.co.uk

Jerry Moss – Red squirrel ranger – Whinfell Forest.



THANK YOU

Sincere thanks to all landowners allowing our ranger and volunteer teams' access to their woodlands, our trustees, supporters and the kindly folks who have been involved with raising invaluable funds at previous shows, events, talks, birthday and other fundraisers and last but not least our subscribing members - it's you that keeps our charity afloat!

We appreciate each and every one of you and simply cannot do our work without your continued support, allowing us to protect the red squirrels in their natural environment within 650 square miles of north Cumbria that our dedicated 'boots in woods' teams do on their behalf.



THANK YOU TO OUR REGULAR SPONSORS WHO PROVIDE PRODUCTS & SERVICES TO THE GROUP FREE OF CHARGE!

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www.hhreedsprinters.co.uk



The Brantwood Country Hotel
www.brantwoodhotel.co.uk



Alan McViety www.doddaccountants.co.uk



Cumbria Open for Business
www.cumbriaopenforbusiness.co.uk



Center Parcs (Whinell Forest)
www.centerparcs.co.uk



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP



We have our own Ebay shop (Penrithredsquir0); if you have not already visited, why not take a look today. Items include P&DRSG merchandise as well as squirrel feeders hand made by our Rangers and volunteers.



P&DRSG now linked to AmazonSmile.

Here's how to shop AmazonSmile:

1. Visit smile.amazon.com
2. Sign in with your Amazon.com credentials.
3. Choose a charitable organisation to receive donations, or search for the charity of your choice.
4. Select your charity.
4. Start shopping!
5. Add a bookmark for smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

If you visit Amazon it prompts you to go to AmazonSmile with one click.

YOU CAN ALSO HELP US BY:

- Sponsoring our contractors.
- Organising a fundraising event.
- Sponsoring our feed costs.
- Hosting our merchandise for sale.
- Sponsoring our newsletter.
- Recruiting new members.
- Supplying boxes (small & medium) and packaging for Ebay items.

For General Enquiries Contact:

Julie Bailey, P&DRSG

Administrator/Treasurer on:

07788 264571 or

info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk



You can also contact us via our Facebook page: PENRITH & DISTRICT RED SQUIRREL GROUP.

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group - Membership/Donation Form

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group - Registered Charity No. 1117418

All memberships are for the calendar year payable at any time - Minimum membership fees are £20 (individual), £30 (family) however please feel free to pay a higher amount. Monthly standing orders are ideal for us as this does away with sending renewal reminders.

Title _____ First name _____ Surname _____

Address _____
_____ Post Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

I will pay £ _____ monthly / yearly / by standing order * Circle preference/s

Signature _____ Date _____

For standing orders please complete the Standing Order Instruction below. For cheques please make payable to P&DRSG.

Gift Aid?

* Yes / No

* Circle one

Want to increase your contribution by 25% at NO COST to you?

As a registered charity, Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group can reclaim 25% of the amount you donate from the tax you pay. For us to claim Gift Aid, you must agree we can, and your taxes must not exceed the Gift Aid amount. As a UK Tax Payer if you pay less Income Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed it is your responsibility to pay any difference.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group (P&DRSG) captures your details in a membership database that is shared with P&DRSG Trustees & Rangers for your area. To comply with GDPR we need your consent to hold your data so we can contact you and send newsletters and messages. * Please circle around your preference below

I would like P&DRSG to send me newsletters and messages * I would not like P&DRSG to send me newsletters and messages *

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group - Standing Order Instruction

To _____ Bank / Building Society

Bank Address _____

_____ Post Code _____

Regarding Account Number - - - - - Sort Code - - / - - / - -
Eight Digits Six Digits

Account Name _____
The name of the account holder

Please pay HSBC Bank, Market Square, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7SN Sort Code **40-36-10** for the credit of
Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, Account Number **01310968**

the sum of £ _____ beginning _____ of _____ . _____
day month year

and thereafter every month / year * on the same day until further notice,
*Circle one above

and debit my / our account accordingly, cancelling any previous standing orders to P&DRSG

Signature _____ Date _____
The signature of the account holder

Please return this form to P&DRSG, Woodside, Armathwaite, Cumbria CA4 9SX or info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk