

PENRITH & DISTRICT RED SQUIRREL GROUP NEWSLETTER

March 2019



www.penrithredsquirrels.org.uk



WORDS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, ROBERT BENSON

As a small boy, we had red squirrels in our garden near Petersfield in Hampshire in the early 1950s. Sadly they soon disappeared, driven out by the non-indigenous and more powerful greys or so we were told. I moved 300 miles north to Cumbria in 1976 and instantly became reacquainted with red squirrels. My passion was reignited, and I was determined to prevent the same thing from happening here in Cumbria.

Based on the Lowther Estates, I called together a group of landowners and in due course this became P&DRSG. We now know a lot more about the demise of the red and the virus carried by the invasive greys that has decimated red squirrel populations. I think I can honestly say that without our grey control work, there would not be any red squirrels in this part of Cumbria. We have reversed the flow but sustaining this effort is very difficult.

There is no silver bullet and work on providing a contraceptive in feed to halt greys breeding is perhaps a realistic hope but in reality, is still years away. So, it is down to us with our ranger contractors and volunteers.

We are now one of the last red strongholds in England and Scotland faces the same problems where their reds are under threat too. Unfortunately, government support or more importantly the funding that flowed from that support has all but disappeared in the last few years.

We need your help both in terms of funding and support in many other ways – please help spread the word and persuade your family and friends to join too.

After years of never seeing a red squirrel in my garden, one appeared about a month ago on the peanut bird feeder. I instantly put up one of our P&DRSG squirrel feeders and then a second feeder so that we could get a better view. These feeders are made by our rangers and volunteers with their time donated to the charity.

My delight has now doubled – I have 2 reds in the garden providing hours of pleasure and preventing me from getting too much work done!!



PHOTOS BY SARAH MCNEIL

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group,
Woodside,
Armathwaite,
Cumbria CA4 9SX.

Registered Charity Number : 1117418

For General Enquiries Contact Julie Bailey, P&DRSG Administrator/Treasurer on:

07788 264571 | info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk

UPDATES FROM THE RANGERS

Gary (P&DRSG Ranger) – Upper Eden Valley:

Last year was the best for the red squirrels since I started and this year has set off just as good. Reds are being seen all over the Upper Eden Valley. It is important to report your red squirrel sightings to us as well as the greys so we can map out the whole area of operation. Sadly 5 road kills of reds have been reported to me since the beginning of the year and I have dispatched 30 greys so far. We will be attending most of the local shows so please come and show your support. If you like to take photos of red squirrels, Shap Wells Hotel or Lowther Castle is a safe bet when it comes to catching a glimpse of the reds. However to continue our work we need funding, so please help us to help our reds by joining today.

Justin (P&DRSG Ranger) – Ullswater:

2018 and the start of this year have been very good for red squirrels in the Ullswater & Haweswater Valleys; with a noticeable increase in population especially in the Ullswater area of my range. I have multiple feeding stations up and down the lake, and have been busy this winter supplementary feeding the Reds through this lean time. Grey squirrel sightings and kill numbers are right down compared to this time last year. Dalemain has been a real success after culling big numbers of greys in 2018 and I'm glad to see the red squirrels returning in good numbers to all the wooded areas.

All that remains to be said is to reiterate a big thank you to all the landowners and the public for their continued support and input.

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

September started with the annual sightings of greys moving about which continued into October. Picking up greys in those months feeding on the abundance of natural feed can prove frustrating. November however was more successful. Reds in the main in my area are doing well and the Whinfell Forest numbers are still on the up. The first couple of months in 2019 I have still been picking up the greys but not in big numbers I am pleased to say. Feeders seem to be of more interest now as the natural food has all but gone. Breeding season is also here now so its that time of year when we will soon see red squirrel kittens once again, lets hope the weather and conditions are kind to the reds. Thank you to all for your continued support.

John (P&DRSG Ranger) – Northern Eden Valley:

Things have been a bit quieter over the winter months with fewer grey sightings being reported. As I cover the whole of the Northern Eden Valley it is impossible to check every location to make sure it is grey free so I do rely hugely on the public to get in touch if they do see a grey squirrel to enable me to carry out the control. It is equally important to report any reds you see so as we can record where they are and try our best to protect them so please if you do see anything red or grey drop me a text, email or give me a call with any information.

Overall I am quite happy with the reds I am seeing lately. In one location in particular I have six different reds feeding from feeders regularly, which is very encouraging. Hopefully the spring trapping will show a decline in grey numbers and an increase in reds.

Once again I would like to thank all volunteers for their help and also to all the landowners for allowing me to go onto their land and carry out my job.

David (P&DRSG Ranger) – Dalston/Caldbeck:

Since the last newsletter there's been further progress to repel the 'Greylian' insurgents and I have had some great help from quality volunteers prepared to go the extra mile to winkle out greys that turn up without notice.

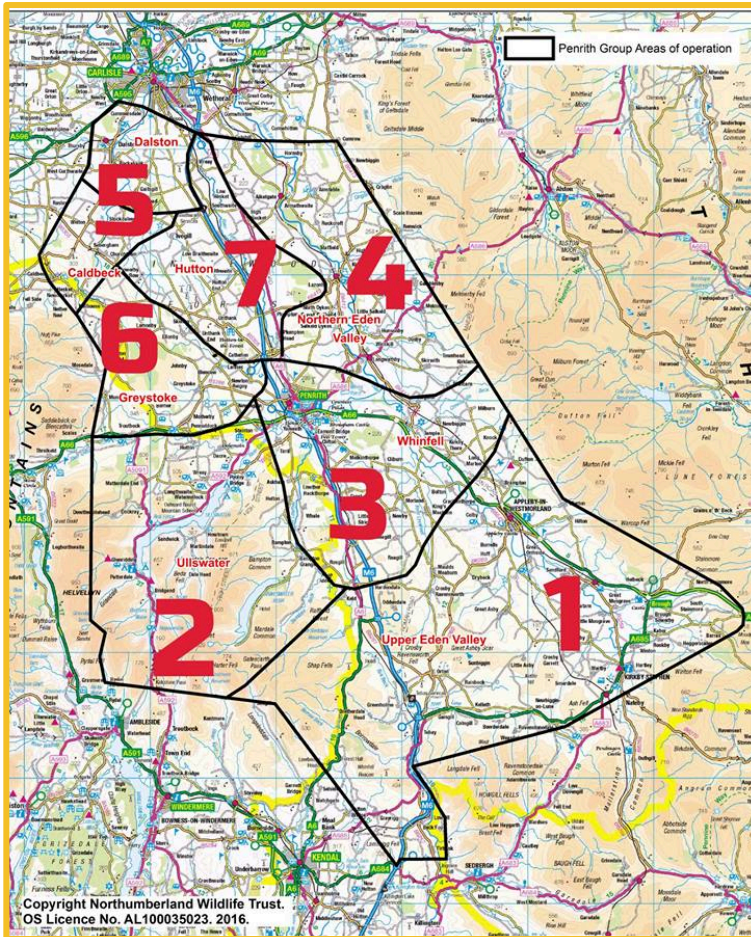
On a positive note, reds are definitely featuring more regularly on my monthly records and I'm hopeful that our efforts will be further rewarded this summer after another breeding season. February and March are tricky months for detecting greys but technology is on hand to supplement our intensive fieldwork. The use of thermal and wildlife trail cameras improves a ranger's efficiency many fold and helps focus effort.

I am grateful to all landowners for their continued support and to those who fund raise for the group and provide me with hospitality and words of encouragement.

Shaun (P&DRSG Ranger) - Hutton:

Having taken on the role in December, it's been a busy few months with greys turning up constantly around the Southwaite area, possibly down to an excellent breeding year. However there are good numbers of reds being seen across most of the area. Regular reports from locals with sightings have been very helpful in a bid to understand the movements of both reds and greys and to be able to act on them as soon as possible. It will be interesting to see what this year brings and thank you to everyone involved.

WHO TO CONTACT



TO REPORT ANY SQUIRREL SIGHTINGS PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:

1. GARY | 07974 788434 | garymurphy24red@gmail.com
2. JUSTIN | 07388 831150 | info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk
3. JERRY | 07736 779965 | jmossjerry@aol.com
4. JOHN | 07841 449648 | john.lisle@btinternet.com
5. DAVID | 07542 191865 |
6. MATTHEW | 07949 366334 |
7. SHAUN | 07522 699265 | rosiese1990@icloud.com

FOR ANY REPORTS OUTSIDE OF THE P&DRSG AREA PLEASE CONTACT NORTHERN RED SQUIRRELS AT:

www.northernredsquirrels.org.uk

P&DRSG Red Presence 2018

3,896 red sightings reports

Red pins = red presence in 1,992 individual grid reference sites.

For General Enquiries Contact Julie Bailey, P&DRSG Administrator/Treasurer on:

07788 264571 | info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk



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



SQUIRREL NEWS & OTHER INFO

WHY THE PINE MARTEN IS NOT EVERY RED SQUIRRELS BEST FRIEND...

The media message is simple: the return of pine martens will herald the decline or even eradication of grey squirrels. That's because pine martens supposedly prefer eating greys, while leaving reds alone. The optimism around pine martens in the UK originated from research in Ireland and Scotland. In Scotland, scientists studied forests containing pine martens, red squirrels and grey squirrels. The more pine martens they recorded using a woodland area, the more likely they were to find red squirrels and the less likely grey squirrels were to be there. Like earlier Irish studies, this suggested that pine martens suppress grey squirrel populations to the overall benefit of red squirrels. However, that's not quite the whole story. There's a desire in the media to find heroes and villains in nature which simplifies the situation and obscures the potential impact of a returning predator on British wildlife and livestock. Sadly, ecology and conservation are rarely simple and the restoration of pine martens will not always follow a script.

RED SQUIRRELS ON THE MENU?

The Scottish pine marten researchers make clear that pine martens sometimes eat red squirrels. In a small number of other studies conducted elsewhere in Europe, reds were in fact a significant seasonal component of pine marten diet – up to 53% in one case. It's therefore incorrect to suggest, as some conservation groups have, that dietary studies show pine martens very rarely eat red squirrels. The reality is that predation rates reflect the relative abundance of red squirrels to other prey, encounter rates and local habitat characteristics. Why grey squirrels have declined in the presence of pine martens remains uncertain. The impact of martens on greys may vary geographically and it's unwise to simply extrapolate the findings from Scotland and Ireland to the rest of the British Isles without a note of caution. Suggesting the pine marten is the best long-term solution for grey squirrel control in England is premature and requires more research to confirm. It reinforces the need for informed discussions with all interest groups likely to be affected.

An approach to conservation that's media-friendly but built on limited evidence rarely works, and certainly won't in pine marten restoration.

For the full article please visit <https://theconversation.com/why-the-pine-marten-is-not-every-red-squirrels-best-friend-110209>



The Pine Marten... Friend or Foe??

NEW LANTRA ACCREDITED AIR RIFLE COURSE – "SHOOTING GREY SQUIRRELS FOR RED SQUIRREL CONSERVATION"

A new course to help red squirrels has been developed. It is the only registered accredited air rifle shooting course for grey squirrel management in the UK that gives landowners proof of competency on the part of the shooter. The course is delivered by a Lantra Firearms Instructor/Assessor & his approved assistant and it offers qualification following passing two assessments (written & practical). It is suitable for those whose primary interest is in red squirrel conservation. For more details and to book a place contact Julie Bailey at j.bailey203@btinternet.com



NEWS IN BRIEF:

RED SQUIRRELS ARE THRIVING ON THE ISLES OF SCILLY, 5 YEARS SINCE THEY WERE INTRODUCED TO THE ISLAND OF TRESCO. THE POPULATION HAS INCREASED FROM JUST 20 TO APPROXIMATELY 100.

FUNDRAISING

KATIE, OUR STAR BAKER

Katie Rogers, aged 10 from Maulds Meaburn has recently donated £100 to us, raised from selling her homemade cakes. Every Saturday since the end of September 2018, Katie has been busy baking, and then puts the cakes in the village bus shelter on a Sunday morning, asking for a suggested donation of £2 per cake. Katie's cakes have been very popular, especially the fruit cake, carrot cake and chocolate brownies and are usually sold out by early afternoon. One Sunday last month, the 14 cakes put out were down to one by 11.17am!!

To date Katie has risen just over £500, and has donated £100 to five charities, a mix of national and local ones. We are delighted that Katie chose PDRSG as one of those, inspired by the fact that she has a red squirrel visit her own garden and often sees them about when walking her dog and wanted to do something to help them. Here Katie is pictured in the bus shelter, proudly showing off her certificate and very own 'Squirrel Nutkin' and of course, her cakes.

So if you are driving through Maulds Meaburn on a Sunday, why not grab a cake on your travels.



KATIE WITH HER CERTIFICATE & FLUFFY SQUIRREL

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.



FOREIGN / OBSOLETE COINS & NOTES

Drop off your foreign and obsolete coins or notes to the following collection points:

C&W HERALD OFFICE, SHAP POST OFFICE, LANGWATHBY POST OFFICE, APPLEBY TRAVEL, POOLEY BRIDGE POST OFFICE, WORLDWIDE TRAVEL CONNECTION (ANGEL SQUARE, PENRITH) or any P&DRSG COLLECTION BOX.

A big thank you to these locations for agreeing to help and implement this scheme!

YOU CAN ALSO HELP US BY:

SPONSORING OUR CONTRACTOR TEAM

ORGANISING A FUND RAISING EVENT

SPONSORING OUR FEED COSTS

SPONSORING A FEEDER

HOSTING OUR MERCHANDISE FOR SALE

SPONSORING OUR NEWSLETTER

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

FUNDRAISING & OTHER NEWS

VISITORS DONATE £426 TO PENRITH & DISTRICT RED SQUIRREL GROUP AT THE 2018 LOWTHER SHOW

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group and organisers of The Lowther Show are thrilled that monies raised for the northern charity amounted to a staggering £426. Visitors gave generously to the charity raising £213 with the Countryman Fairs matching pound for pound. P&DRSG would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated and Countryman Fairs for their generosity and support.



Nathan White (General Manager, Countryman Fairs), Julie Bailey (Treasurer) and Robert Benson (Chairman)

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

This years APM will be held on the 8th of July at the Penrith Rugby Club starting at 7pm

RAFFLE 2019

The group has launched a raffle with a first prize of £250, which will run from March to 8th July when it will be drawn at the Annual Public Meeting. If you are able to sell raffle tickets on our behalf please let us know.

Please contact Jill on 07845 644035 to arrange collection/ delivery of tickets.

SHOWS & EVENTS WE ARE ATTENDING IN 2019

| |
|------------------------------------|
| Ullswater Fair - 30/06 |
| Appleby Show - 08/08 |
| Lowther Show - 10-11/08 |
| Brough Show - 15/08 |
| Dufton Show - 31/08 |
| Patterdale Dog Show - 31/08 |
| Lowther Xmas Fair - TBC |
| Askham Xmas Fair - TBC |

P&DRSG FEEDERS & FEED

The group's feeders are proving to be very popular. They are made from 100% recycled plastic (stok bord) by rangers and volunteers of the group. All profit from sales goes directly to the group. We also sell squirrel feed of various quantities ranging from starter packs to 20kg bags. To purchase feeders/feed, or for prices, please contact Jill on 07845 644035. Our feeders are also available to purchase from WCF, Penrith & other branches, The Birds Bistro, Penriddock & Devonshire Arcade Pet Store, Penrith.



FINAL WORDS & THANK YOU'S

SQUIRREL CHRIS IS FEELING ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Introducing 'Chris' the courageous red squirrel who against all odds miraculously climbed and conquered his own personal mountain in order to survive. Weighing in at only 80 grams the tiny four week old kitten with eyes and ears still unopened was found by an eagle eyed dog walker near Kirkby Stephen last September.

After being treated for dehydration the little red was then checked over and given the all clear by Pendragon Vets. He was then collected by P&DRSG Ranger Gary who covers that area. Gary carefully transported Chris to the home of red squirrel volunteer Sarah McNeil and Center Parcs Red Squirrel Ranger Jerry Moss. The couple have had many years experience of caring for reds in difficulty.

They knew just by looking at Chris that his chance of survival was extremely slim if he didn't receive intensive round the clock care.

The first two weeks were mentally exhausting for them and many sleepless nights were had but they were determined that nothing would undo all their hard work and dedication to ensure the squirrels survival. Chris was fed special formula milk from a tiny syringe every 3 hours from 5am through until midnight. Every waking day was a bonus as kittens are extremely vulnerable without their mother's warmth and milk.

Sarah would weigh Chris daily, noting down any changes, she would also encourage his toilet duties by simply tickling his private parts using the tip of a cotton bud. Wash downs were also carried out during the day using a warm damp cloth to keep his fur and skin fresh and healthy as his mother would of done. Over time Chris' eyes finally opened (see Photo) and he started to perfect his balance and ability. This then led onto the start of mischief and being a hyperactive squirrel dashing about his cage. He was moved into the large outdoor enclosure where he could develop his skills further, learning to climb with ease and soon getting the hang of using a flip lid feeder. His confidence grew rapidly. As Chris came into the care of Sarah and Jerry very late in the squirrel breeding season and the kitten having to be hand reared getting the red back out into the wild has been delayed, but when the weather improves he will be released to hopefully enjoy a long and happy life in the wild.



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

H & H Reeds Printers – 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

And a sincere thanks to all those who provide help and support to the group.

Cumbria Open For Business
Small Business Solutions For Today's World!

dodd&co
know how



H&H REEDS PRINTERS
Quality Printing, Signs & Display



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

Membership / Donation Form

Your donation provides a One Year Membership

Your details

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Title | First name | Surname |
| Address | | Telephone |
| Post code | | Email |

Existing * member/s * Please circle existing

New * member/s application * Please circle new

I will pay * £5 £10 £15 £20 * Please circle one by monthly standing order

or other amount £ _____ * monthly / yearly / by standing order * Please circle one

Signature _____ Date _____

For Standing Orders please complete the Standing Order Instruction below.

For cheques please make payable to Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group or P&DRSG.

Gift Aid?

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

* Yes / No

* Circle one above

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 exceed the Gift Aid amount.

As a UK taxpayer if you pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed it is your responsibility to pay any difference



Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group

Standing Order Instruction

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------|
| To | _____ Bank / Building Society | | |
| Bank Address 1 | _____ | | |
| Bank Address 2 | 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 Order to P&DRSG | | | |
| Signed | Dated | | |
| _____ | _____ | | |
| The signature of the account holder | | | |

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 and 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. ☐ *

Please return this form to Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, Woodside, Armthwaite, Cumbria CA4 9SX or by email to info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk