



Red Squirrels United

Northumberland Wildlife Trust annual report on project activity

Year Three: Nov 2017 – Oct 2018

Action C3

Prevention of the loss of the English mainland's only grey squirrel free woodlands



1. Executive summary

This report details work completed by Northumberland Wildlife Trust (NWT) during Year 3 (Nov 17 to Oct 18) towards delivery of Red Squirrels United project action C3. It details progress against expected results, indicators, milestones and deliverables. The focus of this action is the **prevention of the loss of the English mainland's only grey squirrel free woodlands**: these are Kielder, Kidland and Uswayford forests in Northumberland and Cumbria.

The early warning squirrel monitoring programme continued to delivering regular intelligence, providing data on grey squirrel arrival in and around the main forests. 195 surveys were completed and 22 different volunteers took part, with five new volunteers recruited to add to the existing workforce. 166 surveys (85% of the total number of surveys) were delivered by volunteers, amounting to approximately 1300 volunteer hours spent setting up trail cameras and feeders, analyzing results and reporting back.

Monitoring work helped to inform planning of grey squirrel management, and the NWT Rangers and local volunteers were able to better target areas for grey squirrel control to protect reds. However, this posed one of the greatest problems to the project in that frequent detection of grey squirrels in multiple locations across large expanses of forest meant that resources were spread too thinly to be able to respond effectively. This problem is exacerbated because of very low human population densities in the area, and the difficulty in engaging locals to actively participate.

The NWT team worked in partnership with four existing community red squirrel groups, providing support and training where possible. A number of talks were delivered in collaboration with these groups, helping to generate new volunteers and raise the profile of red squirrel conservation. A new group was established in the Otterburn area as a result of one of these talks.

Pine martens were caught on camera on multiple occasions during monitoring work for squirrels. These were the first ever trail camera pictures captured of the mammal which is beginning to naturally recolonize areas of northern England, spreading south from Scotland. This sparked much interest from conservationists, and led to a number of articles in the press.

The NWT team worked closely with a number of local estates, and in the North Tyne were successful with three partnership applications for Countryside Stewardship funding. This will ensure some continuity of conservation work to protect Kielder red squirrels.



NWT Rangers worked in partnership with Forestry Commission staff to deliver trap training to local volunteers, and a new air rifle best practice course was developed by the team, working with volunteers from the Northern Red Squirrels network.

60 people, the majority of them volunteers from community red squirrel groups attended 'Red Squirrel Gathering' events in Cumbria and Northumberland where they shared knowledge and best practice. NWT hosted two Red Squirrels Northern England Project Advisory Group & Community Learning Lab meetings, bringing together representatives from partner organisations including local volunteers, NGOs and statutory bodies.

2. Introduction

The three woodlands (Kielder Forest, Uswayford and Kidland) that are the focus of this action are extensive and remote commercial timber and recreational forests in Northumberland, with sections of Kielder falling within the county of Cumbria (Kershope and Spadeadam forests). They provide significant ecosystem services (flood resilience, carbon storage, tourism revenue and rural employment) in addition to their role as a safe haven for native biodiversity, particularly the red squirrel. The three woodlands were designated as red squirrel reserves back in 2005, part of a network of 17 reserves across the north. Together they form what is known as the 'Kielder Red Squirrel Stronghold' complex, a landscape-scale network of woodlands that is a critical part of the conservation of reds in northern England. Action C3 is all about retaining the "grey squirrel free" status of these woodlands.

Northumberland Wildlife Trust (NWT) are the leading NGO in northern England delivering red squirrel conservation through the Red Squirrels Northern England project (established in 2012) and their role in the delivery of Red Squirrels United action C3 around Kielder, Kidland and Uswayford.

NWT work with local volunteers and community red squirrel groups to safeguard red squirrels in and around the main forests in partnership with a multitude of local landowners and managers. In October 2016, an early warning system was established at 50 key locations around the fringes of the forests to provide regular data each quarter on both red squirrel distribution and, critically, grey squirrel arrival. The system helps to inform the team, in order to best target limited resources, particularly with regards to grey squirrel management over what is a large area. Along-side this ongoing information gathering, NWT rangers, local volunteers and land managers carry out proactive grey squirrel management at multiple sites, to protect reds across the landscape.

3. Progress against expected results

This section of the report details progress in Year 3 against the following expected results:

- *Successful protection of 350km² woodland from colonisation by greys*
- *No outbreak of squirrelpox virus in native reds in woodland*

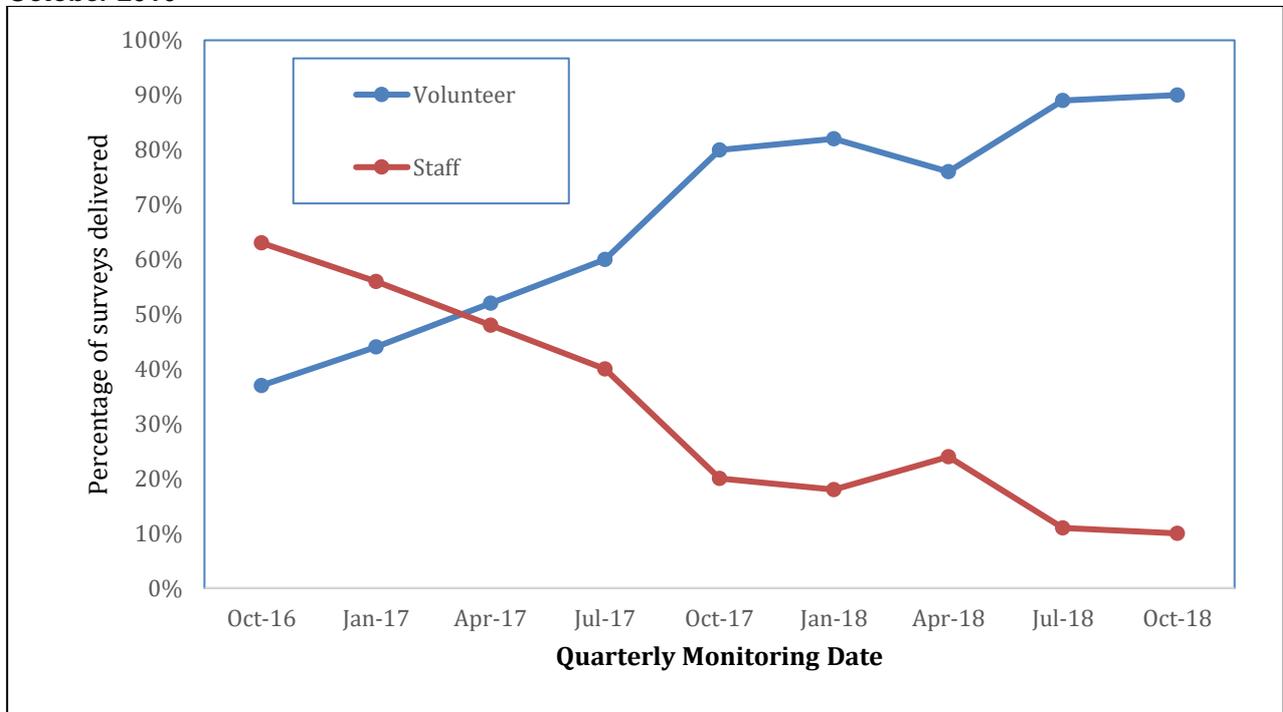


- *New early warning system around all three grey-free woodlands providing ongoing vigilance with little external support*
- *Increase of community run early warning systems from 37% to 75% community involvement.*
- *Three years of systematically recorded grey squirrel management data to aid development of more efficient grey squirrel control methods*

Early warning system monitoring

In Year 3 the early warning squirrel monitoring system delivered a further 195 surveys across the four target zones (1 Coquetdale, 2 North Tyne, 3 Irthing Gorge and 4 North Cumbria). 22 different volunteers took part, with five new volunteers recruited to add to the existing workforce. 166 surveys (an average of 85% of the total number) were delivered by volunteers, amounting to approximately 1300 volunteer hours spent setting up trail cameras and feeders, analyzing results and reporting back to the NWT Data & Monitoring Officer. Figure 1 shows the increase in the number of surveys carried out by volunteers since the first round in October 2016. This level of volunteer input surpassed the expected result (75%) in each of the four monitoring rounds in Year 3.

Figure 1: Percentage of early warning system surveys delivered by NWT staff or volunteers since October 2016



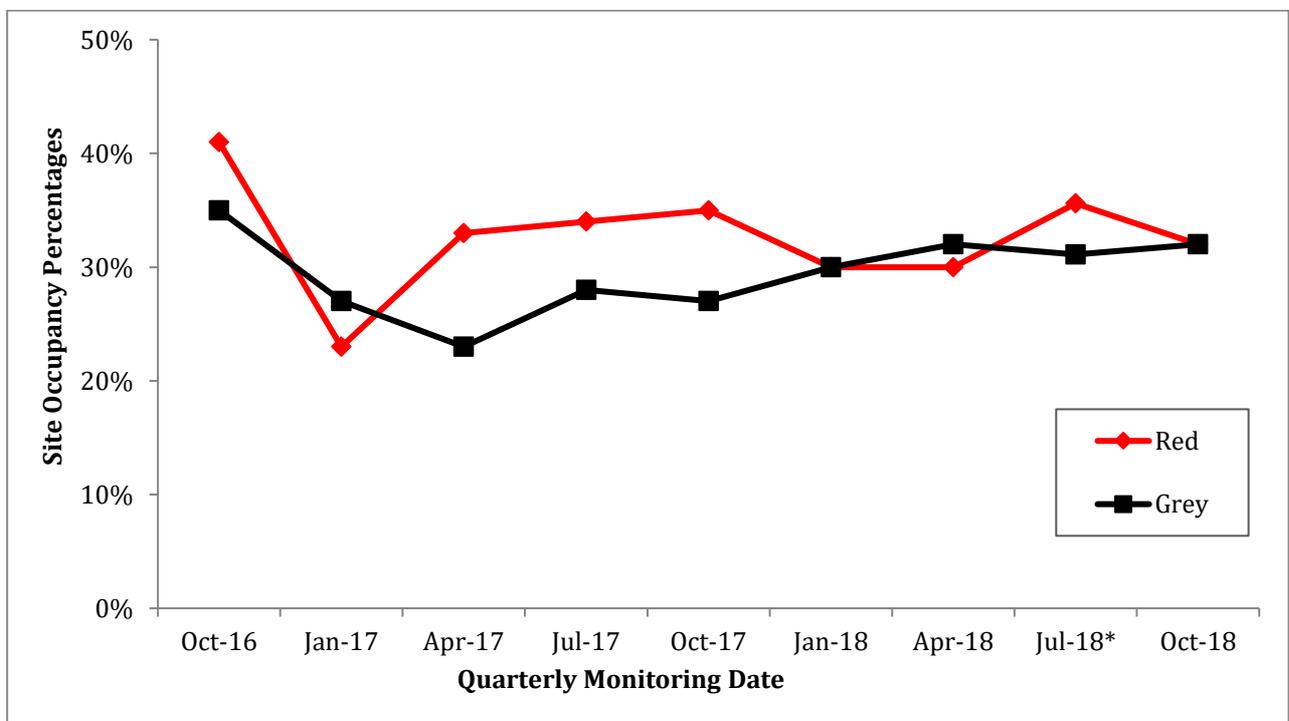
Volunteers included local residents, members of three local volunteer red squirrel groups (North Tyne & Redesdale, Coquetdale and Squirrel Action Greenhead and Gilsland) and placement students from NWT and Cumbria Wildlife Trust. Volunteers from the *Restoring*



Ratty water vole reintroduction project (also managed by NWT) were once again used, ensuring monitoring for both projects could be efficiently combined.

As in previous years, the early warning system provided excellent data, helping to detect the presence of grey squirrels and consequently providing critical intelligence to inform action. Figure 2 shows the overall results each monitoring period between October 2016 and October 2018, showing the percentage of surveys in which reds or greys were detected each round. Although there are not enough sites for the data to be statistically significant, it does illustrate the mixed fortunes of both species, with results fluctuating each period. The graph shows that in October 2018, reds and greys were present in the same number of sites. This trend was a cause of concern to the team.

Figure 2: The percentage of sites where reds and greys were detected during early warning system monitoring October 2016 to October 2018



In zone 1 (Coquetdale) no greys were detected during monitoring in Year 3, and several sites in this zone recorded red squirrel presence in all four quarterly surveys. In zone 2 (North Tyne) results were mixed, and a number of sites picked up greys on a regular basis,



in particular around Hawkhope and Kielder village. These results exposed a weakness in the strategy, in that providing response to grey squirrel detection across such an expanse of forest, with limited staff and low numbers of active locals, is difficult. Human population densities are low around Kielder, and recruitment of new volunteers, particularly for grey squirrel control remained an issue throughout Year 3.

In zone 3 (Irthing Gorge) volunteers from the local red squirrel group helped to deliver trail camera monitoring, and results highlighted the scale of the threat to reds along this route, with greys repeatedly picked up on cameras in the gorge, which is a key incursion route into Spadeadam Forest. The group had limited capacity to act upon results, although the NWT North Cumbria Ranger was able to provide some additional support. The team is determined to find ways to better support the group going forward to protect reds. A single red was picked up on camera at Moscow Farm, within Spadeadam during October monitoring, which provided some incentive to the team and to the local group.

In North Cumbria (zone 4) results were also disappointing, with greys detected in all early warning camera sites at varying times during the year. No red squirrels were seen on any of the cameras, which was of real concern to the team. In October, in response to this paucity of red sightings, the NWT Data & Monitoring Officer and the North Cumbria Ranger set up an additional five monitoring sites deeper into Kershope Forest, with the help of a work placement student at Cumbria Wildlife Trust. The result was excellent, with three out of the five cameras picking up footage of red squirrels. This reassured the team that reds are still present and worthy of continued conservation effort to protect them. Further internal forest monitoring is scheduled for 2019.

In August 2018 the North Cumbria Ranger saw a red squirrel crossing the road, very close to one of the early warning system sites. The ranger then installed an additional trail camera close by to try and capture an image of the red. No red was seen, however the detection of a pine marten instead sparked a frenzy of excitement, it being the first sighting of a pine marten in Cumbria for many years. The previous month, a pine marten was captured on camera during early warning monitoring on the edge of Kielder in Northumberland: the first camera image ever captured in the county. A press release followed, led by Forestry Commission as the landowner in partnership with NWT and the Vincent Wildlife Trust. This resulted in a number of articles in the media, including [The Guardian](#), [BBC News](#), [The Daily Mail](#) and [The Chronicle](#).

The apparent natural spread of martens from south Scotland is big news, and in response, the NWT RSNE Project Manager attended a meeting with Forestry Commission, Vincent Wildlife Trust and Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust on 03rd September and again on 15th October 2018 to discuss a potential future project that might further explore the spread of pine martens across Kielder, and the interactions between martens, reds and grey squirrels in the forest.

There were no outbreaks of squirrelpox virus in the main reserve woodlands during Year 3. The early warning system monitoring is designed not only to detect grey squirrel incursion



but also to provide snapshot indication of red squirrel health. No reds showing visible external signs of squirrelpox were detected on trail cameras. One SQPV case was confirmed in May 2018 at Rupert's Wood, one of 300 annual monitoring sites across northern England surveyed each spring. The site is just over 3km from the edge of Redesdale Forest (Kielder). Local volunteers remained vigilant for a number of weeks following the confirmed case however no further reports of sick squirrels were reported.

Figure 3: pine marten images captured during early warning monitoring: a) the first ever image on camera from Kielder, Northumberland, July 2018, and b) the first recording on trail camera of a pine marten in the county of Cumbria, October 2018



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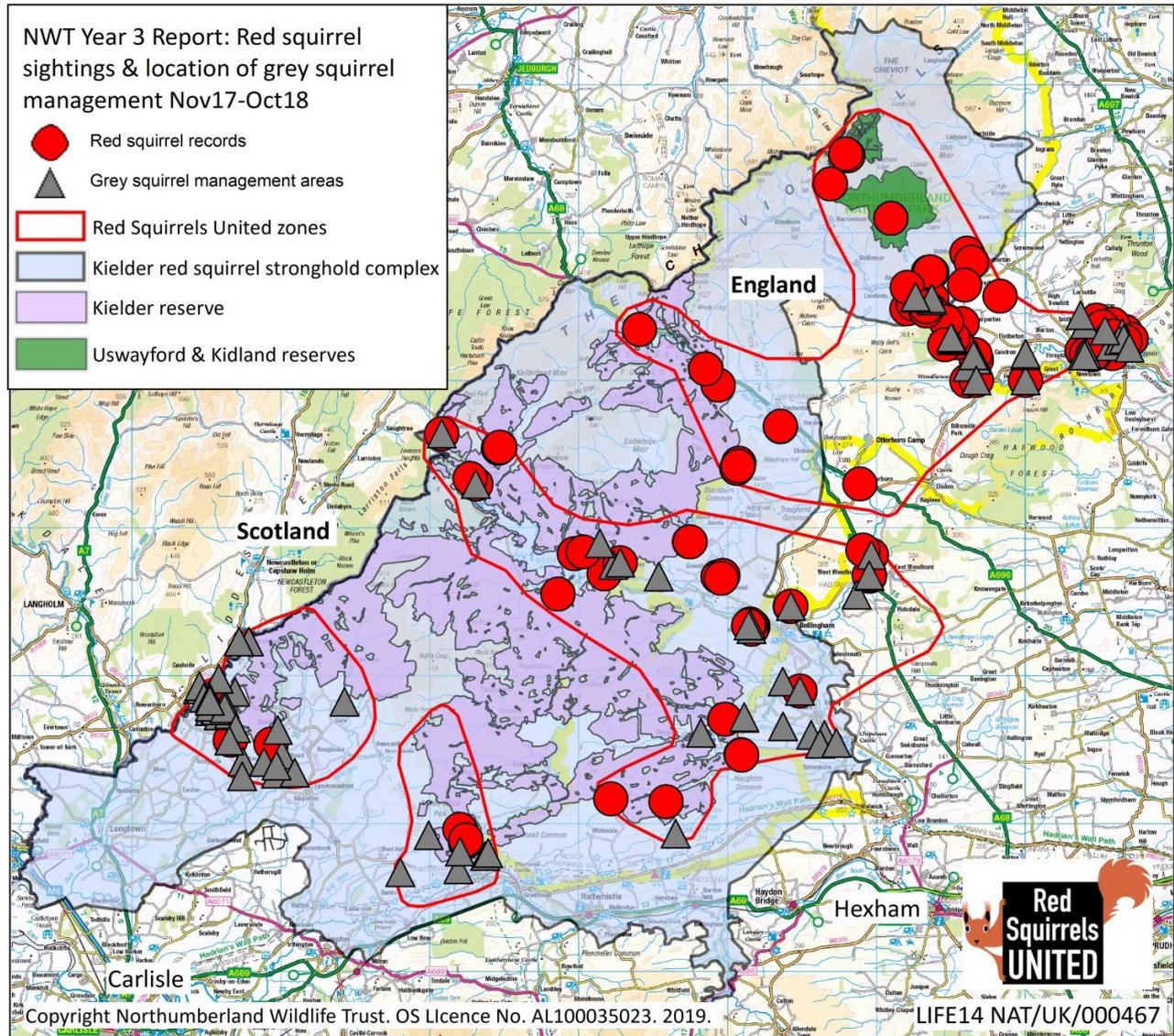




Managing greys

The focus of action C3 is to protect the existing populations of reds within and around the focus forests. Early warning system monitoring during Year 3 helped to provide ongoing data that conflicted with the notion of these forests as 'grey-free'. Kidland and Uswayford remained grey-free throughout the year, but the story for Kielder was quite different. The scale of the problem was highlighted each survey period. The team of rangers and local volunteers attempted to combat this threat, with targeted grey squirrel management in areas around the fringes of the forest. Across the project area, 542 grey squirrels were culled during Year 3. 277 of these were caught by NWT Rangers, and 254 were reported controlled by local volunteer red squirrel groups. Figure 4 shows all records of red squirrels as well as areas of grey squirrel management during Year 3 in all four priority zones.

Figure 4: Red squirrel sightings and locations of grey squirrel management in all four priority zones during Year 3



In North Cumbria, 143 greys were caught by the NWT Ranger and by volunteers working on Kingfield Estate, as part of the Brampton & District Red Squirrel Group. With relatively low numbers in the first half of the year (possibly due to a successful trapping campaign the previous year) the NWT North Cumbria ranger was able to relocate for several weeks, providing support in the Irthing Gorge area (zone 3) to the local Squirrel Action Greenhead & Gilsland group, and also providing some proactive trapping for two weeks around Kielder Castle in zone 2. As a result, 17 greys were trapped in July at the edge of Kielder Forest. This was a surprising yield, however not entirely unexpected having detected greys close by during early warning system monitoring. This result also highlighted the paucity of local community involvement in some of the most remote project areas and the importance of investment in ranger resourcing. The scale of the grey-free forests and consequently the size of the ranger patches makes effective control extremely challenging, but also highlights



the importance of the early warning system in providing intelligence, identifying areas to focus grey squirrel management with limited resources.

NWT did not have capacity to carry out grey squirrel management in zone 1 (Coquetdale). The forests of Kidland and Uswayford are more remote than Kielder with less connecting woodland, and the team were content that monitoring work was providing sufficient evidence that grey squirrels had not reached this far north. The Coquetdale Squirrel Group continued to provide grey squirrel management along with a small number of local landowners, including the National Trust at Craggside, 78 greys were caught in zone 1, with the majority of these in or beyond Harbottle, over 6km from the edge of Kidland, and as far as Rothbury. Data submitted by the group also helped to reassure the team that reds are well distributed across the area.

The NWT North Tyne Ranger focused efforts in the first half of the year on a number of key estates along the river, where incursion pressure is greatest as grey squirrels move almost continuously from the heavily wooded landscape around Hexham, and further east towards the urban areas of Newcastle and Gateshead. Managing greys in the North Tyne remained a relentless job, but it was also necessary for the ranger to work further north and west towards Kielder reservoir. In response to frequent recordings of greys during trail camera monitoring around Hawkhope and Falstone, the ranger began a trapping programme which resulted in some success around the reservoir. A further 10 greys were caught at Stonehaugh, in the south east corner of Kielder forest, in a location where monitoring had captured frequent images of greys.

Although the team had some success in zone 2, acting upon early warning system intelligence, this came at a cost in that mileage for the ranger increased dramatically. This highlighted again that investing in local communities is a necessity, reducing the mileage cost to the project and increasing local ownership of red squirrel conservation. The team continued to encourage the North Tyne group to continue their work this year, and although the group has only a small number of active volunteers, they provided excellent support, working on a number of local estates.

NWT continued to work closely with Newcastle University to provide data, recording all grey squirrel management, red and grey squirrel monitoring, and early warning system monitoring detail in an agreed standardized format. This did present some challenges, not least because the level of detail required surpasses anything that the team had needed to record previously. In particular, this was difficult for rangers who needed to record their work accurately, detailing results in time and space, in addition to the routine fieldwork. Despite these difficulties, data was submitted and will help Newcastle University to develop more efficient methods of managing grey squirrels, as an output for this project.

Supporting local communities

On 07th June 2018, the NWT RSNE Project Manager met with the North Tyne & Redesdale Red Squirrels chairman to discuss opportunities for better collaborative work. As a result, it



was agreed that the project would provide the group with some support funding in the form of a contract. Contracting the group to deliver work provided them with some much needed funds, helped to improve relationships between project and community, and helped to encourage the group to document their work using standard data collection forms, submitted to NWT.

Similarly, in Coquetdale, the NWT RSNE Project Manager met with representatives from the group on 12th June 2018 to discuss a stronger partnership. It was agreed that NWT would contract the group to encourage stronger community buy-in and commitment to undertake more monitoring work in the project area, including taking on a number of the early warning system monitoring sites. Investing in local community groups provided a much needed boost to local efforts to protect reds, and offered excellent value for money.

The NWT team worked closely with a number of key estates in the North Tyne to develop new income streams to support red squirrel conservation. This resulted in three successful Countryside Stewardship applications developed in partnership with local estates. The grants will provide funding to the estates for a number of woodland management tasks, and will also provide financial support to NWT and the North Tyne & Redesdale Red Squirrel Group which will help to sustain work to protect reds in this area for a period of five years from 2019.

On 22nd February 2018 NWT provided support to the local community red squirrel group in Coquetdale, who organised a community event at the Jubilee Hall, Rothbury, Northumberland. This was attended by over 80 people, including active local volunteers, Forestry Commission staff, other landowners and members of the public. The NWT Data & Monitoring Officer provided an update on progress to date around Kielder, and Forest Research attended to explain the social research that they have been carrying out. The UK Squirrel Accord Manager was also present to provide a talk on squirrel fertility control developments. Five new volunteers came forward as a result of the meeting, and will be working with the Coquetdale group.

On 25th September 2018 the North Tyne & Redesdale Red Squirrel Group delivered a community talk in Otterburn, Redesdale, north east Kielder. The NWT Data & Monitoring officer was unable to attend, but helped prepare material for the talk which was attended by Heinz Traut, Red Squirrel Officer for RSNE (not funded through RSU). Although not well attended, the outcome was successful, with the formation of a new local group based around the village. NWT provided 12 traps and 25 feeders to the new group, and will continue to work closely with them in the future. The group also began to submit data to NWT.

On 16th October 2018 the NWT Data & Monitoring Officer delivered a talk to Bewcastle Heritage Society at Roadhead in North Cumbria. The NWT Ranger for North Cumbria also attended to offer support. 14 people were present and were interested to find out more about the project, although rather disappointingly no new volunteers came forward as a result of the talk.



On 31st October the two NWT rangers delivered a trap training event in partnership with Forestry Commission at Rothbury. 16 volunteers attended from the North Tyne and Coquetdale red squirrel groups. The course helped to provide a pathway towards agreeing access for volunteers to trap on Forestry Commission estate, although without a practical competency test, willing volunteers still had to arrange to spend time in the field with FC rangers before access for trapping was granted. The event was well received and attendees provided good feedback.

Figure 5: volunteers attending a trap training event in Rothbury run by NWT staff in partnership with Forestry Commission



Community Learning Labs

In November 2017 NWT held two events for red squirrel conservation practitioners, in Stannington on 11th November and Carlisle on 18th November. Over 60 people from a range of groups attended these events, where they were able to hear updates from NWT staff, and also talks from a number of speakers including Animal & Plant Health Agency (on disease affecting red squirrels), the UK Squirrel Accord (on fertility control developments) and from Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (on the community project north of the border). Attendees were also asked to participate in a workshop led in Stannington by Forest Research, and by members of the NWT RSU team at the Carlisle event. The discussions revolved around community motivations and challenges ahead for red squirrel conservation in northern England.



The 'Red Squirrel Gathering' events allowed NWT staff to engage with a number of community red squirrel groups from across northern England. These events provided the perfect opportunity to engage more with people who are not directly involved with the project, many of whom operate outside of the RSU zones. These events offered an excellent opportunity for conservationists to meet, share knowledge and best practice.

Figure 6: Attendees at the 'Red Squirrel Gathering' community event at Stannington, Northumberland on 11th November 2017. Copyright Bonnie Sapsford.



NWT held two RSNE Project Advisory Group and RSU Community Learning Lab events during Year 3. The first meeting took place on December 05th 2017 in Carlisle, bringing together partner organisations and representatives from volunteer groups to discuss progress. Much of the event focused around future strategy, and a workshop led by Forest Research encouraged participants to explore thoughts on strategy, community involvement and future funding. The second meeting was held on July 12th 2018 in Hexham. The meeting was well attended, and representatives included Wildlife Trusts, Forestry Commission, National Parks, National Trust, Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels and Northern Red Squirrels. Forest Research ran an interactive session on landowner liaison and motivations, and the RSU Programme Manager was also in attendance to update the partnership on progress to date. The meeting also explored fundraising and strategy for northern England, and the NWT Data & Monitoring Officer presented results from the spring 2018 annual monitoring programme.

Nurturing partnerships



On 20th February 2018 the NWT RSNE Project Manager and North Cumbria ranger met representatives from the Woodland Trust to discuss future partnership work in the Irthing Gorge. Discussions focused on the development of a protocol for training and competency assessment for staff or volunteers wishing to use air rifles on Woodland Trust properties. This collaboration laid the foundations for a LANTRA accredited air rifle best practice, safety and competency course. The course was further developed in partnership with the Northern Red Squirrels volunteer network, and trialed on 01st September 2018 at a rifle range in North Cumbria. Both NWT rangers attended the course and were instrumental in course design. Following further refinement, the course has now started to deliver training and competency assessment to practitioners across the north of England, with the NWT North Cumbria Ranger helping to run the training.

The team continued to work closely with the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels project north of the border. The NWT RSNE Project Manager attended the Red Squirrels South Scotland Steering Group in Moffat on 20th March and 18th September 2018, where he was able to update partners from north of the border on progress around Kielder. A new Red Squirrel Forum for South Scotland is now in operation, bringing together volunteer groups from across the region. NWT offered support to the forum and pledged to collaborate in cross border working with both the forum and the Developing Community Action project. On 27th October 2018, the NWT Ranger for North Cumbria attended the South Scotland Red Squirrel Forum, the first meeting of red squirrel volunteer groups and project staff north of the border. He gave a talk on the use of thermal imaging cameras in grey squirrel control. 50 people attended the event.

Media and publications

The NWT RSNE Project Manager was interviewed on BBC Radio Cumbria on 24th September, where he was questioned on the current situation for red squirrels in northern England. The team published their bi-annual Friends of the Red Squirrel members' newsletter (circulation 650 people) in October, containing an article on novel conservation techniques, which focused on training dogs for detection of sick or dead red squirrels. An article was published in the NWT Membership magazine in autumn 2018, focusing on interactions between squirrels and pine martens. Also in autumn 2018 the team put together an article for the Cumbria Wildlife Trust membership magazine, focusing on results from the annual monitoring programme and on the recent spate of pine marten sightings on trail cameras around Kielder, captured during Red Squirrels United early warning system monitoring.

4. Indicators

This section of the report details progress in Year 3 against a number of key indicators, showing progress towards expected results, as follows:

- *Annual spring monitoring at 27 sites inside Kielder, Uswayford & Kidland*



- *SSRS to share data with NWT from nine relevant systematic monitoring points each summer*
- *Any diseased animals will be analysed by tissue testing contractor*
- *Early warning system will identify squirrel occupancy at 40 sites surrounding the fringes of Kielder, Uswayford and Kidland every three months*
- *Systematically record grey squirrel sightings and gather from contractors monthly. Share with NU for modelling*

There are 34 survey sites within the RSU zones that contribute data to the annual spring monitoring programme managed by the NWT RSNE project. 25 of these sites are also surveyed quarterly as part of the early warning system monitoring. In spring 2018, reds were detected in 12 of these sites (35%) and greys in 13 sites (38%). The overall results for the entire programme, with surveys carried out in 290 sites across seven counties, found that reds were present in 42% of surveys (down 3% compared to 2017) and greys were detected in 48% of surveys (up 5% compared to 2017).

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels operate north of the border, carrying out systematic monitoring in nine locations close to the Kielder area. SSRS shared results with NWT for spring 2018, and in autumn 2018 the projects (SSRS and NWT RSNE) put in place a data sharing agreement for the first time. This led to better mapping and analysis of work delivered both sides of the border.

No diseased animals were found within the priority zones during Year 3. After a delay in agreeing protocol for collection of animal tissue within the partnership, NWT Rangers began to sample a number of grey squirrel tissues in Year 2, and this continued in Year 3. Samples were frozen and stored, pending completion of the contract agreement between the partners and Animal & Plant Health Agency.

As detailed earlier in the report, the early warning system delivered trail camera survey results in approximately 50 sites each quarter during Year 3, and all data from this monitoring, in addition to work carried out by NWT rangers, was shared with Newcastle University. It was not possible to share other data compiled during Year 3 from other sources, for example contractors or local groups, as this data was not recorded in the standardised format agreed for rangers.

5. Milestones

Two milestones were identified in the project plan for delivery of action C3. These were as follows:

- *Early warning system completely resourced and maintained at community level*
- *Vigilance established in all current gaps in control pathways leading into the 3 grey-free woodlands*



37% of early warning system surveys were delivered by volunteers during the first round of monitoring in October 2016. Volunteer participation in the programme grew steadily, and in Year 3 a high proportion of the programme surveys were consistently delivered by volunteers, averaging 85% volunteer delivery throughout the year. The programme is due to continue into Year 4, with quarterly early warning system surveys scheduled up until July 2019, at which point the team will look to decide how best to continue this work, harnessing the commitment and enthusiasm of the volunteers. Although volunteers are happy to carry out trail camera monitoring, there is a need for some level of supervision to ensure the work is completed, therefore the sustainability of the programme is dependent on future staff resources.

As detailed earlier in the report, the early warning system provides an effective method of assessing grey squirrel arrival around the main forests. This level of vigilance has massively increased the quality of intelligence, helping both the project team and local community groups to better plan and target grey squirrel management. Despite the effectiveness of the monitoring, it has been extremely difficult to date to respond to results (through active grey squirrel management in all areas, in response to detection during early warning monitoring). This is a critical lesson learnt from the project, and a problem that does not as yet have a solution. Going forward for the remainder of the project and beyond, finding ways to combat the scale of the threat to reds posed by greys around Kielder, with such extensive areas of woodland, little staff resources and minimal community participation (in areas of very low density human occupancy) will be the greatest challenge.

6. Deliverables

This report is the final instalment of the annual reports for NWT, marking the completion of this set of deliverables for action C3.

7. Future plans

Fieldwork will continue in year 3, with both red squirrel rangers proactively managing grey squirrels along key pathways working in partnership with the five local community red squirrel groups. The early warning system will deliver another 150 trail camera surveys, providing intelligence on grey squirrel arrival around the fringes of the main forests. The team will continue to submit all data to Newcastle University up to the end of June 2019.

Key challenges have been highlighted elsewhere in this report, and conquering these challenges will be one of the main focuses for the team going forward. In particular, finding ways to provide better response to the intelligence provided by the early warning system is a priority. Increasing support for existing community groups may better incentivize and equip them to aid this response to grey squirrel detection. Finding new volunteers will still represent a challenge, and this is a consequence of the geography of the project area, working in expansive, remote forests where human population is extremely low. The team will target a number of talks to small communities to help raise the profile and increase



participation in the final months of the project, working in partnership wherever possible with existing local community groups. There is also a key fundraising challenge that will need to be addressed if work to protect red squirrels in and around Kielder, Kidland and Uswayford is to continue beyond the life of the project.

