

# North Tyne and Redesdale Red Squirrels

## Trustees' Annual Report 2020-21

North Tyne and Redesdale Red Squirrels (NT&RRS)

Charity Reg. 1186568

Address: 4 Low Park, West Woodburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2SQ

### Trustees:

Adrian Rawlins, 4 Low Park, West Woodburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2SQ

Susan Underwood, 1 Hazel Cottages, Otterburn, Northumberland NE19 1LL

Philip Chard, Snuggygate, Noble St., Bellingham, Northumberland, NE48 2EE

### Structure and Management:

The Group is administered by a Management Committee meeting regularly (nominally monthly, excepting limitations due to Covid). The committee includes the Trustees and any group member who may wish to attend. Decisions are by taken by vote, as laid down in the Constitution.

Trustee selection to fill a vacancy is by majority vote at an AGM. Group members may also be co-opted on to the Committee for a short period.

### Activities and Objectives:

Following on from last year, Covid has remained a serious concern. However, the low population densities in our rural communities have kept infection to a relatively low level. Also the early development of effective vaccines has been helpful.

Field work has continued at a similar level as before Covid, less affected by fear of disease than the cost of fuel: since traps, once set, require daily visits. We're currently testing wireless devices that warn the trapper by email or text when the trap is activated. However, regular checks are still necessary to ensure that weather shelters are in place and feed replenished.

We purchased a thermal imager early in the year. This is capable of detecting squirrels in the tree canopy that would otherwise remain unseen. This is useful for detecting the presence of squirrels and estimating their numbers; although it cannot distinguish between red and grey. Squirrels show as a small bright light on a monochrome image.

Thankfully, we've not detected any incidence of squirrel pox. Greys are the dominant reservoir of infection; thus it tends not to be a problem when their numbers are low. Grey control by trapping can help during a localised outbreak or where resident reds may otherwise be at risk. However, a much more serious problem, most particularly in the context of climate change, is the loss of woodland due to grey squirrel bark stripping; for which trapping alone by small, thinly spread groups, such as ourselves, is entirely inadequate. Whilst we can maintain viable, healthy red populations in discrete regions, the very high UK grey population coupled with their prodigious rate of reproduction requires more radical measures: There are two science based approaches currently under development, described below:

An oral fertility control for grey squirrels has been developed that can be administered as a feed additive. Since it's effective on both species, red and grey, it requires a feed dispenser that excludes reds. Trials are currently under way on a prototype feeder that uses the substantial weight difference between the species (greys are almost double the weight of reds). This needs to be exhaustively

tested in the wild, across the combined body mass range of both species. Some of our group have been involved in both the design and testing.

A second approach, at a much earlier stage of development, is a gene drive for greys that causes treated females to produce only female young for a certain number of breeding cycles. This has the advantages that it's specie specific and time limited.

Analysis has shown that the use of such measures at a landscape scale, combined with conventional trapping, can substantially and progressively reduce the current very serious rate of woodland loss.

#### **Achievements and Service to the Public:**

We maintain open access to the public through published email and 'phone links. This provides assistance with squirrel related concerns, such as disease, tree damage or recording sightings. This is an important function, since an alert and interested public can greatly increase the effectiveness and coverage of observation and also provide a reservoir of potential active group members.

Squirrel management contracts for Northumberland Wildlife Trust (NWT) and MOD at Otterburn Ranges were completed as planned and thus our expenses for this year are covered.

**Financial Review:** The Group's essential expenses cover insurance, feed, disinfectant, transport and equipment. Group activity is limited both by cash-flow and personnel numbers. Although there is a great appreciation of the importance of red squirrel survival in this area, the population is sparse and of modest income. We therefore tend to rely more on contracts to cover costs rather than individual contributions. The completion of work for NWT and and a further MOD contract largely covered our outgoings for the year. A small but worthwhile contribution came from plant sales by one of the Trustees.

*This document and the following Accounts have been read and agreed by the following Trustees as being an accurate and complete description of the Charity's work over the year:*

*A.D. Rawlins*

*S. Underwood*

*P Chard*

*Dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022*

# North Tyne and Redesdale Red Squirrels

	Year End
Income	31-Dec-21
R1 Membership	0.00
R2 Donations	20.00
R3 Sale of plants	116.00
R4 Grants	1350.00
R5 Sale of feed	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1486.00</u></b>

Expenditure	
P1 Stationery	0.00
P2 Website hosting	0.00
P3 Purchase of feed	0.00
P4 Equipment	0.00
P5 Purchase of sundries	-58.52
P6 Room hire	0.00
P7 Publicity	0.00
P8 Cost of sales	-15.00
P9 Insurance	-302.84
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>-376.36</u></b>

Receipts & Payments Account for the Financial Year Ended 31-Dec-21		
	Year End 31-Dec-21	Last Year
	Total £	Total £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
Membership	0	0
Donations	20	0
Sale of plants	116	30
Sale of feeder / trap food	0	0
Grants	1,350	2,200
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>1,486</b>	<b>2,242</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Stationery	0	-25
Website hosting	0	-64
Purchase of feeder / trap food	0	-211
Purchase of sundries	-59	-249
Purchase of Equipment	0	-252
Room hire	0	-46
Publicity	0	0
Travelling expenses	-15	0
Insurance	-303	-303
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>-376</b>	<b>-2,313</b>
<b>NET RECEIPTS-PAYMENTS</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>-71</b>

Movements in Funds for the Financial Year Ended 31-Dec-21					
Cash Assets	Bt'Fwd at 31-Dec-2019	Receipts in Period	Payments in Period	Transfers in Period	Cd'Fwd at 31-Dec-21
<b>Cash at Bank &amp; in Hand</b>					
Petty Cash	0	0	0	0	0
Bank, Current Account	1,969	1,486	-376	0	3,079
	1,969	1,486	-376	0	3,079
<b>Investment/Deposit Accounts</b>	<b>Bt'Fwd</b>	<b>Deposits</b>	<b>Withdrawals</b>	<b>Net Transfers</b>	<b>Cd'Fwd</b>
Bank, Deposit Account	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Cash Assets</b>	<b>1,969</b>				<b>3,079</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>1,969</b>				<b>3,079</b>

Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31-Dec-21				
	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total at 31-Dec-21
<b>Cash Assets</b>	3,079			<b>3,079</b>
<b>Other Monetary Assets</b>				<b>0</b>
<b>Investments Assets</b>				<b>None</b>
<b>Assets Retained for Own Use</b>	916			<b>916</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				<b>None</b>

Assets as at 31-Dec-21	
Description	Value
Thermal Imager	802
Microscope	114
<b>Total</b>	<b>916</b>

Note: Assets retained for own use are shown at purchase price. Current (residual) value is unknown.