

JUNE 2008
Summer

Issue 4

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Fence trap shown above at Milton of Leys

More fascinating squirrel facts!

- Red squirrels belong to the order Rodentia, family Sciuridae.
- It is one of 27 known tree squirrels worldwide
- There is no obvious size difference between the sexes

ARE YOU NUTS ABOUT RED SQUIRRELS?



NEWSFLASH!!!! FIRST GREY SQUIRREL IN INVERNESS

As many of you will now be aware, we have a grey squirrel on the loose at Milton of Leys, just south of Inverness.

Since the press attention in April, the individual 'vanished' for 5 weeks but has 're-emerged' recently in the gardens of the estate.

We have 5 traps set on the estate, 3 in gardens and 2 on common ground. So

far, we have failed to catch the grey, but we must keep positive as it is vital to remove it from a stronghold of the red squirrel.

We are using mink traps and specially adapted fence traps. All of these are live traps and once the grey is caught, it will be removed from the estate and humanely dispatched by a professional.

We are very grateful to the residents of Milton of Leys for being so helpful. The traps in the gardens are monitored daily as are those on common ground. This ensures that if the squirrel is trapped that it will be dealt with quickly with the minimum of stress.

Keep an eye on the press for further news and if you would like to help out, give Juliet a phone!

MONITORING ALL GREY RECORDS IN HIGHLAND



We have had several reports of other grey squirrels within Highland since the press interest—shown below.



So far, none of these records have been confirmed. These records

have a wide geographical spread from Forres to Newtonmore.

In each case, Juliet has a chat with the recorder and if it is established that it is likely to be a grey, the recorder is asked to keep an eye out and to take a photograph/film if possible.

The next stage is to set

up a hair tube which collects hairs from visiting squirrels which are attracted to the tube by bait. If, at that point grey hair is identified, live traps are placed.

Luckily, so far we have only had to go this far in Milton of Leys, but do please stay vigilant as we would rather know of a suspicion than not!



Looking for cones and dreys at Rogie Falls, May 2008

SURVEY TRAINING

We held 2 very successful survey training sessions in May—Contin and Carrbridge.

The event at Contin attracted a large number of enthusiastic wildlife records from Ross-shire and the event was organised in partnership with Highland Council ranger service.

In total 28 people turned up for the talk at the old school and then many came for the walk at Rogie Falls.

Whilst we didn't actually see any squirrels that day, we saw lots of dreys and stripped cones. The result is that we now have many more Ross-shire survey volunteers which

is great to have!

Likewise at Carrbridge, we had a good turnout. The evening was beautiful for our walk and Juliet is going back to do some more detailed survey training with the villagers later in the summer. This event was organised in partnership with the Woodland Trust Scotland.



A groovy volunteer leader from Glasgow looks for squirrels in her own way! Mar Lodge, May 2008

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Juliet recently attended some training for volunteer management at Mar Lodge. It was run by BTCV (British Trust of Conservation Volunteers) and it was a good opportunity to meet other volunteer managers and to share experiences.

Most of the others were from the Central Belt and dealt with environmental projects as wide ranging as the green gym for young people, market gardens for people with mental health difficulties and good food projects for refugees in North Glasgow.

The consequence of attending will be to become a 'case-study' and support and advice will be provided by BTCV.

Juliet will keep you posted with developments!

WILD WEST

We had a terrific day at Glen Righ Forest in March (see photo on page 3).

The night before, Juliet gave a talk at The National Trust for Scotland's visitor center at Glencoe.

We had a good turn-out of over 30 people, mainly from in and around Lochaber.

The next day we met at Glen Righ and had the fabulous experience of seeing 4 of Lochaber's

best red squirrels! They performed for us and I think everyone very much enjoyed the spectacle!

Hopefully this will mean more people in Lochaber and surrounds will record squirrels.

FACTOID

Squirrel dreys consist of an outer shell of twigs and a soft, insulating inner core of mosses, leaves, conifer needles and grass

EDUCATION

An extremely pleasurable part of the job is visiting schools all over the Highlands.

Juliet has had direct contact with over 900 school kids over the last 2 years. Some of these children are undertaking their own surveys and sending in records of squirrel sightings—see photo to the right.

A great success has been the undertaking of John Muir Awards. Three

schools are currently working towards their award by using red squirrels as their focus.

Other groups have been in touch with the project also—scouts, guides and adult groups too. Last week we had a lovely evening in Tradespark Wood, Nairn with 24 Nairn Beavers who are now the ‘guardians’ of the local red squirrels!



During the spring, Juliet spoke to numerous adult groups such as Contin and Evanton WRIs. It is good to know that people of all ages find red squirrels so fascinating and are willing to take part in recording where possible.



Farr Primary kids set off to do their own red squirrel survey, April 2008



Glen Righ event in March

A group of 50 spot 4 red squirrels at Glen Righ Forest, Lochaber. Can you believe it!!!!

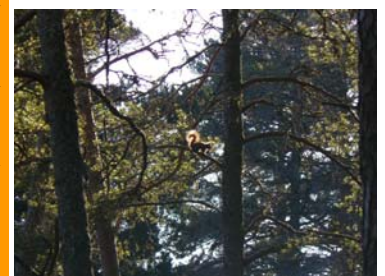
ROPE BRIDGES FOR CARRBRIDGE

The community of Carrbridge is showing a great deal of interest in the possibility of erecting rope bridges over some of the roads to reduce the number of road casualties of their beloved red squirrels.

It is a well known fact that many squirrels die on the roads at Carrbridge and the villagers feel that they should explore the possibility of accessing funding to put up some bridges.

As this goes to press, a meeting with the Community Council should decide if funding is available and then action can be taken.

A Carrbridge red squirrel poses in the evening light!



ARE YOU NUTS ABOUT RED SQUIRRELS?

CONTACT

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WE ARE ON THE WEB!

www.highlandredsquirrel.co.uk

'See Red Highland'

consists of a number of partners and projects, all working together to conserve red squirrels in the Highlands of Scotland. The partners include Heritage Lottery Fund, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Highland Biodiversity Partnership and the Highland Red Squirrel Group.



Please note the **new postcard** for distribution shown above.

We designed this card to aid the reporting of Highland squirrels. Let Juliet know if you can think of an appropriate place to distribute them! They are available from some FCS offices, some libraries, the Speyside Rangers, Cairngorms National Park Authority and Trees for Life.

EVENTS DIARY SUMMER 2008

27 June 10.30am to 12

ROSEHAUGH
ESTATE, Black Isle

- Guided walk

1 July 5 to 7pm

CORRIMONY, Glen
Urquhart

- Squirrel survey
training

19 July

DORNOCH
SHOW

- Stall, do visit!

7 August

BLACK ISLE
SHOW

- Stall, do visit!

8 October

ABERNETHY
Nethybridge

- Talk and walk

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**All open to the
public**

More details to follow,
keep an eye on our web-
site