

## **SEE RED HIGHLAND NEWS & EVENTS**

### **VOLUNTEERS**

We need you! We desperately need more people to help us with the conservation of the Highland red squirrel. There are 3 levels of involvement which you could take part in, depending on the time you have available. Whether you have just enough time to spare to send a recording (either of a stripped cone, a drey or an actual squirrel) or to conduct a survey or to become a lead surveyor, we would be most grateful for your time.

#### **Level 1      Send sighting of a squirrel or signs of squirrels to this website.**

This takes a matter of seconds! Please record any red or grey squirrels, stripped cones or dreys.

#### **Level 2      Become a survey volunteer**

We would encourage volunteers to undertake training first where possible. In 2006 we ran free training sessions in Nairn, Munlochy and Grantown-on-Spey. In 2007 we will have training session in Tain in September and in Fort William in the October/November. Please contact Juliet if these would be of interest or if you live elsewhere to let me know and if there are enough people we could do more training in your area. If you feel confident enough to carry on without training, Juliet can send you a survey guidance pack.

**Where to survey?** Really it depends on where you live in the Highlands. We can provide maps and support to help choose a site. We are particularly keen to do more surveys on the MORAY/HIGHLAND border – around Nairn, Elgin, Findhorn and Forres. Also we are keen for surveys to take place in areas outside the main core squirrel areas of Inverness and Strathspey such as THE WEST AND NORTH WEST HIGHLANDS. Juliet can help select a site for you, just email or phone.

**So what's involved?** Surveying for squirrels can be done in 3 main ways:

- 1 Sighting survey – follow a set route around a wood and record what you see each season. This could be either squirrels or signs of squirrels.
- 2 Stripped cone transect – measure out an area of 50mx1meter and count the number of stripped cones which fall into the transect each season. This gives an idea of what the squirrels are eating and where.
- 3 Hair-tube survey – this is a more technical form of survey which is designed to identify type of squirrel within an area i.e. red or grey.

#### **Level 3      Become a lead survey volunteer**

As the Highlands is such a huge area, we are looking for some people to undertake a bit more responsibility. This person would be the co-ordinator their particular area, though still supported by Juliet. The 4 areas are thus: Inverness-shire, Ross-shire, Caithness & Sutherland, Lochaber and Badenoch & Strathspey.

If you are already a squirrel survey volunteer, let Juliet know if you would like to take a lead in your area and be the main local point of contact.

### **DIARY DATES 2007 – free and open to all**

- 7 March Talk at Strathpeffer community centre, Ross-shire
- 10 March Talk and guided walk at Coulhill wood, Alness, Ross-shire
- 17 March Guided walk at Abriachan wood, Inverness-shire
- 12 May Display at the Balmacara show, Ross-shire
- 1, 2 June Display at Touchwood Festival, Dingwall, Ross-shire. [LINK TO SITE](#)
- 12 June Launch of CCTV squirrel cameras at Foyers, the Red Squirrel Café, Foyers Post Office, Inverness-shire. Come along if you can. See information below.
- 21 July Display at the Dornoch county show. Come along and say hello!
- 2 August Display at the Black Isle show.

***We will have some freebies to give out at all shows!***

- 11 August Display at the Strontian show, Lochaber
- September Squirrel Survey Training at Tain, Caithness & Sutherland. More details to follow
- 16 Sept Guided walk at Tradespark wood, Nairn. More details to follow.
- October Squirrel Survey Training at Fort William, Lochaber. More details to follow.
- October Highland Red Squirrel Group AGM. Venue and time to be arranged.

### **TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Raising awareness of red squirrel conservation makes up a large part of Juliet's job. Consequently, Juliet has spoken to a wide range of groups and where appropriate, has taken them outside to 'hunt' for squirrels. These are the sort of groups we have dealt with and if you are with a group, contact Juliet to come and speak to you.

- School groups – Primary and Secondary. Juliet is a registered teacher with enhanced disclosure, is a walking group leader and is trained in first aid. So far Juliet has spoken to over 150 children about red squirrel conservation!
- Out of school groups – brownies, scouts, rambling, explorers
- Adult groups - social groups, WRI, environmental groups, walking, rambling, archery.

### **SQUIRREL CCTV**

On the shores of Loch Ness, at Foyers, we have put some cameras into squirrel box nests. One is show above. The photo shows a young squirrel in the next last summer, and we are hoping the new cameras will capture youngsters being brought

up this year. We have 3 cameras, one which films in front of the Post Office and 2 within squirrel box nests. The idea is to see and record squirrel activity and we think this is a first for the Highlands and perhaps Britain! Come to our launch of the cameras – 12 June at Foyers Squirrel Café at 11am.