

Where to see Red Squirrels!

I recently visited the Hauxley Reserve (run by Northumberland Wildlife Trust) just outside Amble. It is an absolutely stunning new facility (to replace the one burnt down several years back). You can now do a circular walk around the reserve, with bird hides at specific points. You can also watch the birds from their cafe windows overlooking the lake – and they sell home-made scones and very good coffee. But – the high point was that from their car park, I was able to watch two red squirrels on feeders. Amazing! But don't believe me, go and see for yourselves. Entry is free, but donations welcomed. You can also see (if you are lucky) reds at Howick Hall and Wallington Hall.

You can now access all the information about our group -Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrels - and the Rothbury-based Upper Coquetdale Squirrel Group - on our website www.lcreds.org.uk and on the Facebook page "Squirrels in Coquetdale". Many grateful thanks to our web manager for all his help! Please keep letting us know what you see on the very snazzy sightings button on our website!

Recent articles in the press mention research at Exeter and Edinburgh universities, which has discovered that grey squirrels have superior behavioural flexibility to solve problems, as compared to the reds. This may therefore be another factor which explains greys outnumbering reds in the UK by more than 15 to 1. (Guardian 24/2/18). Research is continuing into contraception for greys, which will hopefully eventually alter the balance more in favour of the red squirrel.

Controlling grey squirrels is a labour-intensive job, as once traps are set they should be checked once or twice daily. We therefore need more local volunteers to come forward to help us in our attempts to save our red squirrels in Northumberland- which is one of its last strongholds in northern England. All offers of help are very much appreciated and if people were to look after a small local patch of woodland that would be an enormous help, as is reporting any reds or greys when out and about or in your garden. If you would like to find out more, contact us via our website, or do get in touch with Ron Lightfoot or John Batchelor in Felton, or Rosie Mould in Newton/Swarland areas.



Here's a lovely pic taken by a trail camera a couple of weeks ago, thanks to a very dedicated lady who has been supporting these particular Red Squirrels in the area for many years. There is a lot of scientific information showing that supplementing the feed for Reds is a big help in keeping our remaining ones healthy – so keep up filling up your feeders.

On behalf of Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrels Group