



> **Seen one of these lately?** probably not, though they have been seen in the local area recently. More likely you've seen one of these little blighters >>>>>>>>>>

Well more and more of you are now reporting sightings via our website at www.lcreds.org.uk which is great but one or two people are still trying to report sightings via a now defunct mobile number; so, if that's you, please try the web address which is much easier and 24 hours a day.



By way of explanation, when you report a sighting it joins all of the other sightings that we have received via the website and this gives us an overall picture and trends so that we can respond accordingly - sometimes trapping sometimes shooting (just greys!) We don't necessarily respond to every sighting, we just don't have the manpower - of course we are all volunteers with other demands on our time. However, all of your sightings are important to us - whether red or grey, so keep them coming please.

There are exciting times ahead, we are not fighting a losing battle, though it does sometimes feel that way. There is currently a number of reintroduction programs of Pine Martins, mostly in the south and Wales. The Pine Martin like our red squirrel has been around for thousands of years and the two coexist quite happily. Grey squirrel populations however have been shown to drastically reduce once the Martin recolonises an area and as many of you will know they have been spotted in Kielder Forest this year. I've also just learnt that they have been seen in Kidland Forest also.



So the grey squirrels are not getting it all their own way.

You may also be aware that there is a research program ongoing using grey squirrel bait with a contraceptive ingredient that causes the animal to lose its fertility for a period of time. The trials will take some time and of course must not impact any other creatures, but initial reports suggest that in time this could be another measure that will help to stem the tide of grey squirrels.

Back to the home front - whilst out walking with your dog or just out for a walk you may come across a feeder or a squirrel trap; these should have a little sign on saying they belong to our group but some don't have them as yet but they all belong to **Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrels** and are part of our ongoing monitoring or conservation work. You may also see one of us watching a feeder or setting a trap, we are quite approachable and friendly and will happily tell you what we're up to so stop and have a chat. You may want to get involved with our efforts to keep the grey squirrels at bay so that the reds can remain in the area, if so, there are contact details or an enquiry form on the website.

Ron Lightfoot, Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrels