



CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The Great Scottish Squirrel Survey returns this autumn, following last year's efforts when over 650 people reported 790 squirrel sightings in just one week. Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) is calling on the nation once again to explore the great outdoors. Between 2-8 October 2023 (National Red Squirrel Week) we want to see more people than ever looking out for both red and grey squirrels.

Squirrel sightings should be recorded on the SSRS website, scottishsquirrels.org.uk

Why do we need this data?

SSRS has been collecting public squirrel sightings since 2010, last year we received a massive 10,484 sightings with the help of the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey, giving us our third highest recording year to date. The data not only improves our understanding of how squirrel populations are changing over time, it also helps our team take direct conservation action.

Public sightings are more important than ever and play a key role in informing red squirrel conservation efforts. Each squirrel sighting reported during the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey will provide a detailed snapshot of the current situation on the ground.

Why should people take part?

Reporting a squirrel sighting is one of the simplest things that anyone in Scotland can do to help protect red squirrels. It can also act as a gateway to wider engagement with the project and red squirrel conservation as a whole – many of our most dedicated volunteers started out as keen squirrel spotters.

Autumn is the ideal season for a nationwide squirrel survey. At this time of year, squirrels are often more visible than usual as they busily gather food, preparing themselves for the colder months ahead.

The Great Scottish Squirrel Survey is an opportunity to raise awareness, boost engagement and collect real, valuable data. Participants in the Survey will be doing a small act to help protect one of Scotland's most iconic yet threatened species, while joining in a mass citizen science event.

When will we find out the results?

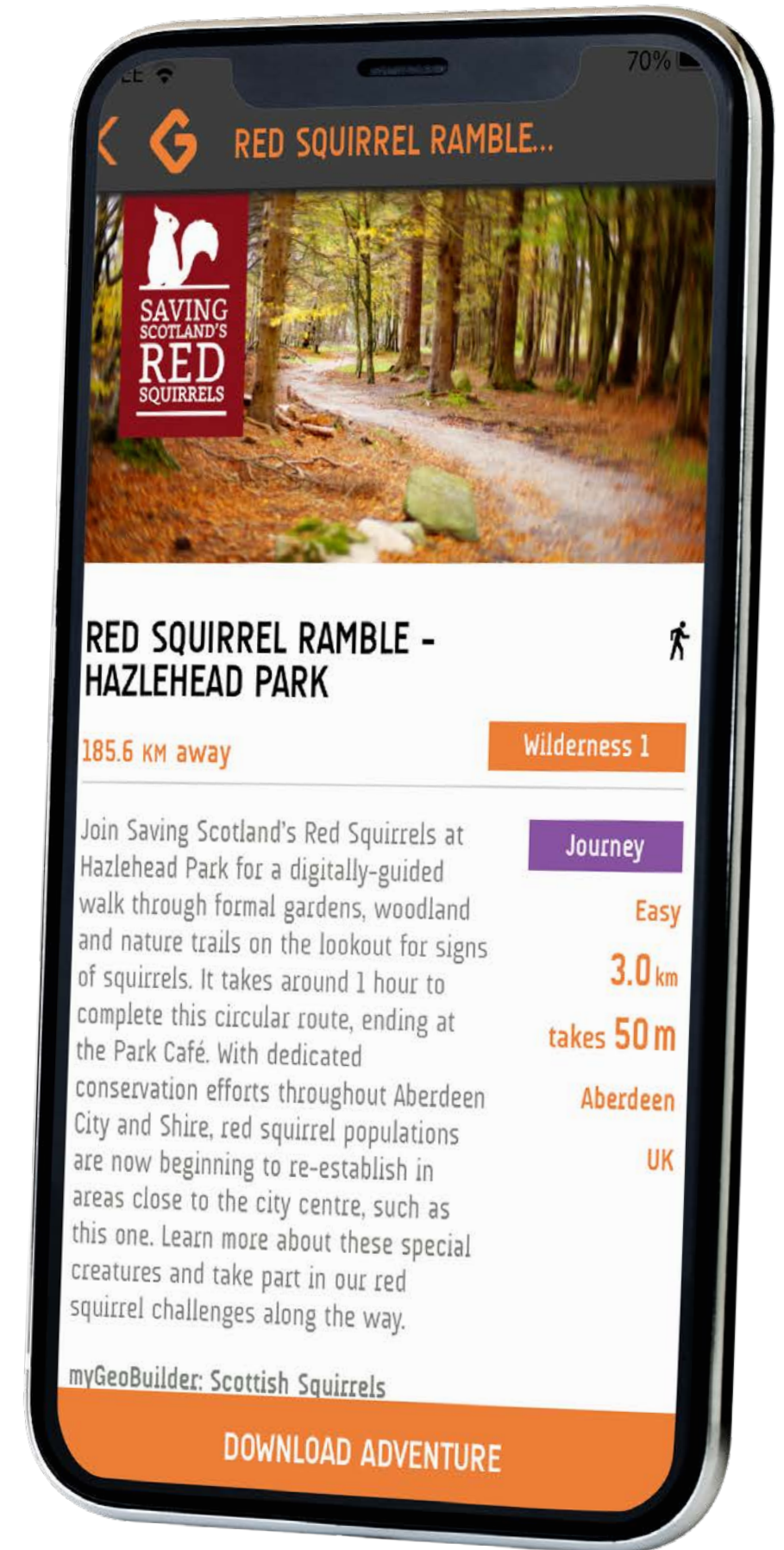
Each sighting we receive is verified by a member of our team before being included in the Scottish Squirrel Database and added to our online sightings map. We anticipate that the data collected during the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey will be verified, collated and published by December 2023.

GET INVOLVED

There are a number of ways your organisation or community group could get involved in the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey. For example, by helping us promote the campaign or by hosting or co-hosting an in-person or virtual Great Scottish Squirrel Survey event with us.

Why not organise a group trip to a well-known squirrel stomping ground? Or, even better, an area of ideal squirrel habitat where few sightings have been recorded before.

We have a number of activity ideas, tools and resources available to help you take part...



HOST A SURVEY EVENT

You can champion red squirrel conservation and inspire others to get outdoors this autumn by hosting your own squirrel spotting event during the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey. Encourage your local community to join this mass citizen science movement by creating a squirrel-themed wildlife walking route for local residents and families to follow, or go digital and raise awareness with a video live stream.

Who can take part?

What makes the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey so great is that anyone can take part. Squirrel watching can be a solo activity that doesn't require elaborate equipment to look and listen to your surroundings. You can also explore alternative ways for people to take part, such as downloading a walking route or checking out our past squirrel talks online.

Event activities

Ensure compliance with the latest Government guidelines when planning your event and always put public safety first. A health and safety risk assessment is always advisable when planning in-person events to ensure appropriate weather and safety measures are in place.

There is always the option to go digital. You could host an online talk about red squirrels in your area or film a live nature walk from your local patch to celebrate one of Scotland's most iconic mammals.

When & where

Choose a date and time between 2-8 October 2023 that will best suit your local community. Activities such as walking routes could be made accessible for the whole week.

Consider that squirrels are often most active early morning for the best chance of seeing these charismatic creatures, but can also be seen at other times of the day. Your event could take place anywhere in Scotland - areas of known red squirrel territory and grey squirrel territory are equally important, as are areas where few squirrels have been seen.

If going digital, you could even inspire others from your own back garden by sharing video content of bushy-tailed visitors.

How to promote sightings

Every sighting of both red and grey squirrels counts, so remember to inform participants that they can report what they have seen to scottishsquirrels.org.uk, during or after the event.

PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

GREAT SCOTTISH SQUIRREL SURVEY

Red Squirrel Guided Walk

Take part in the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey!

Join our community woodland group for a walk in the woods as we look out for tufted ears and bushy tails. Explore the family-friendly trail and become an expert squirrel-spotter along the way.

Saturday 7 October
12pm – 2pm

Meet at the woodland car park
Free event, booking essential.
Contact us at woodlandgroup@email.com

scottishsquirrels.org.uk

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels is led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, a Scottish registered charity (charity number SC005792). It is also a company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland (registered number SC040247). Image © Raymond Leinster.

GREAT SCOTTISH SQUIRREL SURVEY

Red squirrel livestream

Get involved in the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey!

Grab some breakfast and join the local red squirrel volunteers online as we look out for tufted ears and bushy tails. We will be streaming live from our special red squirrel hide and chatting about the vital conservation work that is happening in the local area.

Tuesday 3 October
7am – 8am

Streaming live on [Facebook.com/squirrelgroup](https://www.facebook.com/squirrelgroup)
For more information contact us at squirrelgroup@email.com

scottishsquirrels.org.uk

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Great Scottish Squirrel Survey event template for social media

PRINTED MATERIALS

The following materials are available for downloading and self-printing, for display at reserves, workplaces, visitor centres and other community meeting places. Some limited financial support may be available to cover printing costs - please get in touch if your organisation or group is interested.



Great Scottish Squirrel Survey flyer



Great Scottish Squirrel Survey A3 and A4 poster



Great Scottish Squirrel Survey worksheet

TEMPLATE ARTICLE

We have put together a short article that could be included in a newsletter, blog or web page.

The Great Scottish Squirrel Survey returns back in-person for its fifth year this autumn. Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels is calling on people all over Scotland to explore outdoors and look out for tufted ears and bushy tails between 2-8 October 2023 (National Red Squirrel Week).

SSRS monitors squirrel populations all year round; but autumn remains a particularly rewarding time of year for squirrel-spotting. Squirrels are often more visible as they busily forage the autumn harvest in preparation for the winter ahead.

Anyone can take part in the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey by reporting sightings of both red and grey squirrels throughout the week. Each sighting creates a snapshot of the situation, helping the project understand how populations are changing over time and to decide where to focus its conservation efforts.

To find out more and record your squirrel sightings, visit **scottishsquirrels.org.uk**

GET INVOLVED

SOCIAL MEDIA

The project Facebook page is facebook.com/SavingScotlandsRedSquirrels

The project Twitter handle is [@ScotSquirrels](https://twitter.com/ScotSquirrels)

The campaign hashtag is [#GreatScottishSquirrelSurvey](https://twitter.com/hashtag/GreatScottishSquirrelSurvey)

The web address to include is scottishsquirrels.org.uk



Suggested tweets



Seen a squirrel? Help [@ScotSquirrels](https://twitter.com/ScotSquirrels) by taking part in the [#GreatScottishSquirrelSurvey](https://twitter.com/hashtag/GreatScottishSquirrelSurvey). Report your sightings at scottishsquirrels.org.uk



We're joining the [#GreatScottishSquirrelSurvey](https://twitter.com/hashtag/GreatScottishSquirrelSurvey)! Look out for squirrels this week (red and grey) and report them to [@ScotSquirrels](https://twitter.com/ScotSquirrels) at scottishsquirrels.org.uk



Explore outdoors with [@ScotSquirrels](https://twitter.com/ScotSquirrels) this [#GreatScottishSquirrelSurvey](https://twitter.com/hashtag/GreatScottishSquirrelSurvey) and report all sightings of both red and grey squirrels to scottishsquirrels.org.uk

ABOUT SAVING SCOTLAND'S RED SQUIRRELS

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels is working to ensure red squirrels continue to be a part of Scotland's special native wildlife. With the help of partners, landowners and volunteers, the project is monitoring squirrel populations across Scotland, managing the impact of squirrelpox and helping to combat the spread of grey squirrels in key areas.

Our efforts are making a difference — in many of our project areas, red squirrels are already making a comeback.

SSRS has been undertaking strategic control of invasive non-native grey squirrels since 2009, which pose the greatest threat to the survival of red squirrels due to outcompeting them for food and living space. Some grey squirrels in the south of Scotland also harbour the squirrelpox virus, which is lethal to red squirrels without affecting greys.

Alongside vital conservation work, the project focuses on engaging with local communities and individuals, inspiring them to take action to protect red squirrels where they live. The project is part way through a funded two-year Transitional Phase to enable continued support for some local volunteer groups and ongoing conservation efforts.

Collaboration with our partners and stakeholders is key to establishing long-term, sustainable red squirrel conservation in Scotland, along with community action which has the added benefit of connecting more people with the nature on their doorstep. From submitting sightings on the website, to participating in operational surveys and helping out at events, volunteers of all backgrounds can help ensure red squirrels continue to have a home in Scotland.

Contact us

squirrels@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Scottish Wildlife Trust reception: **0131 3127765**

Project areas





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t 0131 3127765 scottishsquirrels.org.uk