



CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The Great Scottish Squirrel Survey returns this autumn, following last year's efforts when over 1,334 people reported 1,959 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 30 September - 6 October 2024 (Red Squirrel Awareness 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 17,016 sightings with the help of the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey, giving us our second 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?

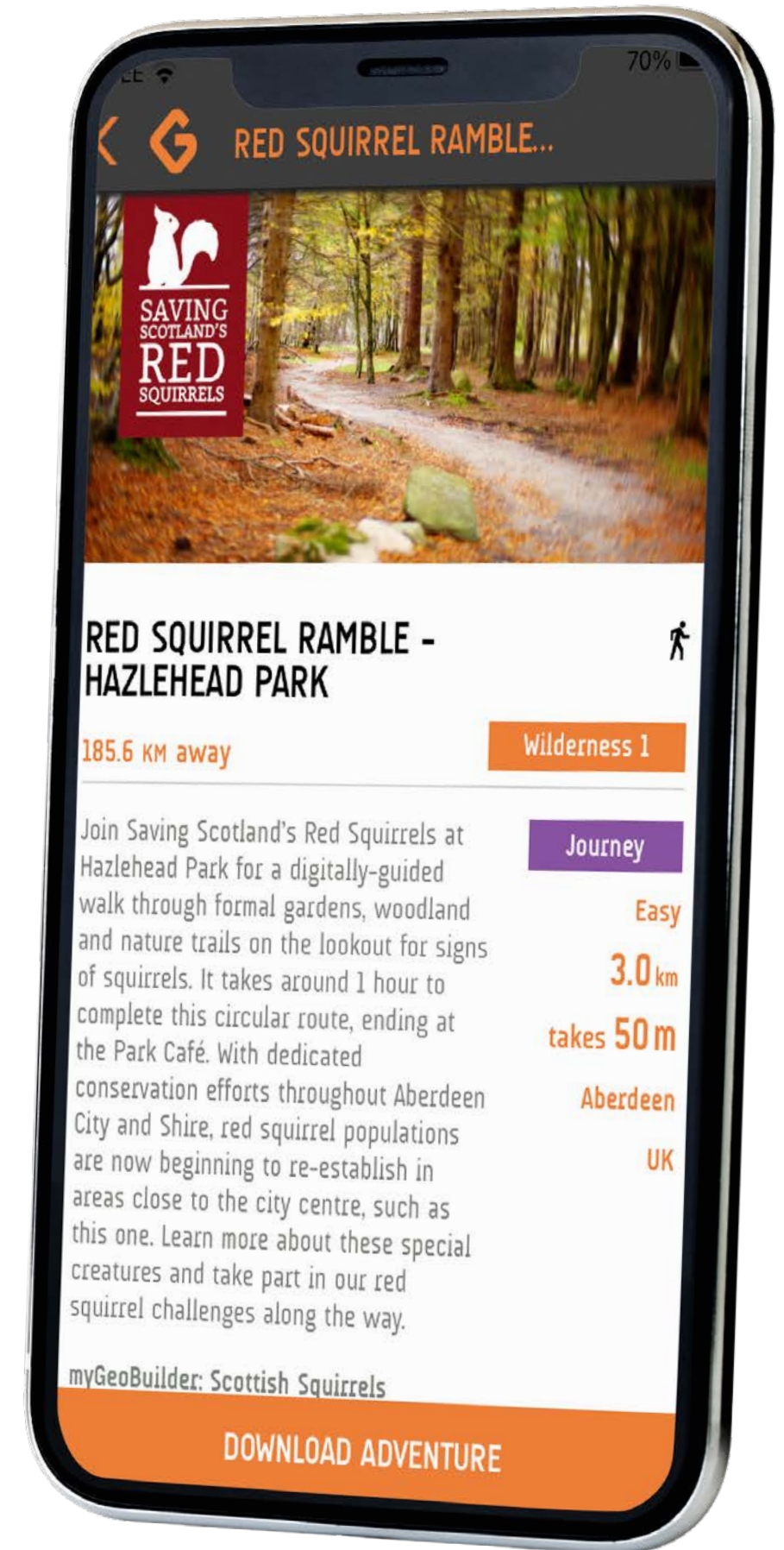
Each sighting we receive is verified by a member of our team before being included in the Scottish Squirrel Database and added to our online sightings map. We anticipate that the data collected during the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey will be verified, collated and published by December 2024.

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

When planning your event 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.



When & where

Choose a date and time between 30 September - 8 October 2024 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 host an online talk about red squirrels in your area, 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.

GET INVOLVED

PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

The following templates are available to download and customise to your Great Scottish Squirrel Survey event. Email us event posters and details to promote through our events listings.

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 5 October 2024
12pm – 2pm

Meet at the woodland car park

Free event, booking essential.

Contact us at woodlandgroup@email.com

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

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.

Red Squirrel Online Talk

With your local nature reserve

Saturday 5 October 2024

To book a slot and access Zoom link please email reserve@email.com

Report your sightings at
scottishsquirrels.org.uk

Great Scottish Squirrel Survey
event template for social media

Great Scottish Squirrel Survey
event poster template

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.

Popular citizen science event, The Great Scottish Squirrel Survey, is returning for its sixth year this autumn. Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) is calling on people all over Scotland to once again get outside and explore the outdoors, look out for tufted ears and bushy tails, and record all sightings of grey and red squirrels between 30 Sept - 6 Oct 2024 (Red Squirrel Awareness Week).

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

All sightings are valuable, no matter where in the country, whether they're from back gardens or the wider countryside. Each sighting creates a snapshot of the situation, helping SSRS understand how populations are changing over time, and know where to focus critical 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 X 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 posts



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

Red squirrels are one of Scotland's most loved and iconic animals, and for many people an encounter with a red squirrel is a joyful experience.

However, red squirrels underwent catastrophic population decline in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries due to the spread of the invasive non-native grey squirrel, first brought to the UK from North America by landowners in Victorian times. Grey squirrels outcompete reds for food and habitat, with some also carrying the squirrelpox virus which does not affect them, but is deadly to reds. Whilst most of the UK's red squirrels are found in Scotland, without direct action they are at risk of extinction: a great loss for our natural heritage that would deny future generations the chance to enjoy them.

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels has been working since 2009 to ensure red squirrels continue to have a home in Scotland. We are empowering communities and individuals to take action to help their local red squirrel populations thrive again. Our work to date has shown that well-managed grey squirrel control in targeted areas can make a significant difference — in many of these areas red squirrels are recovering and thriving once more.

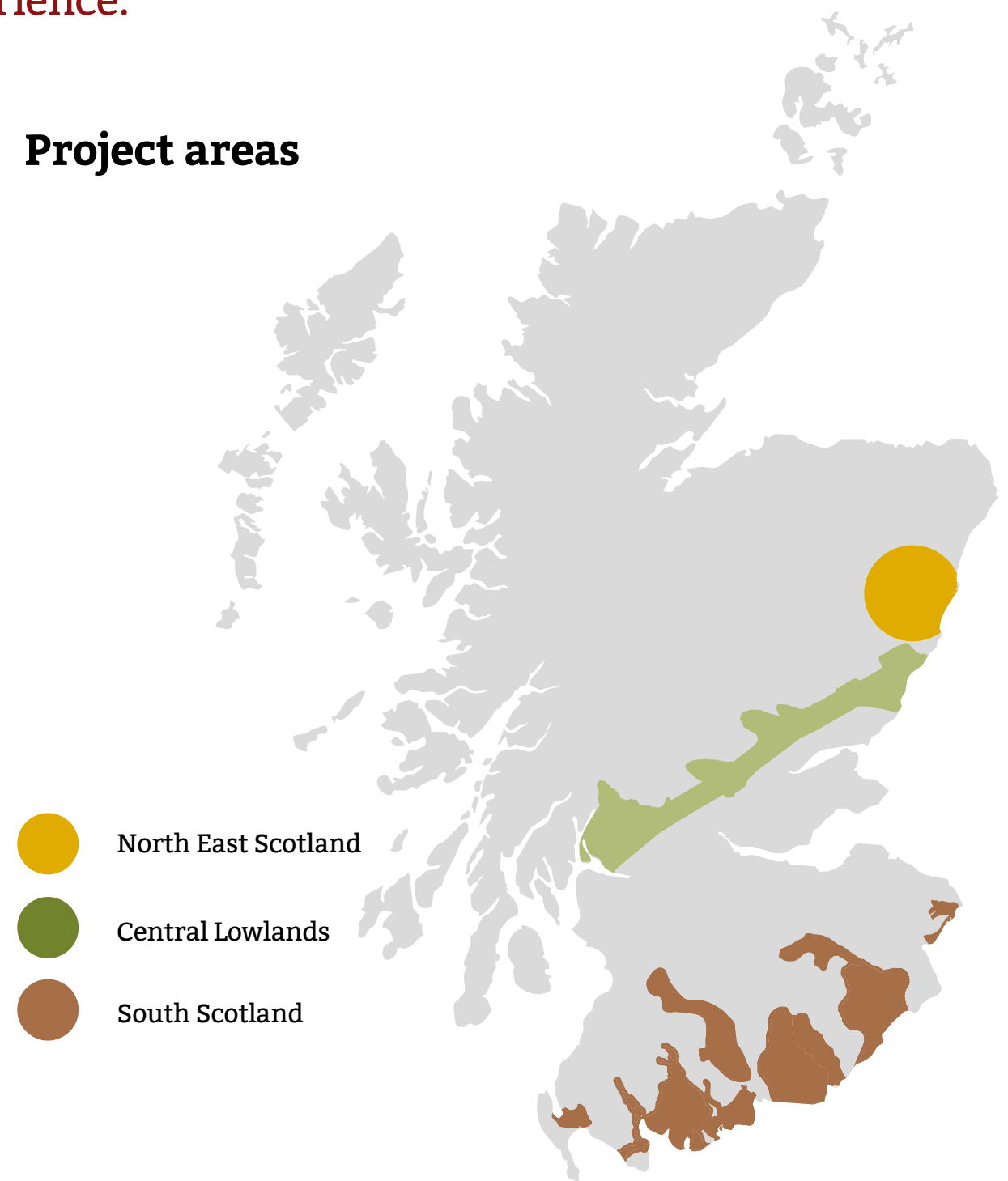
But there's still a lot of work to be done. With the help of volunteers, communities, stakeholders, landowners, and partner organisations, we are employing strategically co-ordinated landscape scale grey squirrel control, along with targeted monitoring and surveying activities, to protect priority areas where red squirrels are under threat and promote long-term population expansion - transforming hope for red squirrel fortunes in Scotland.

Contact us

squirrels@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Scottish Wildlife Trust reception: **0131 3127765**

Project areas





SURVEY PARTNER



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