



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
The Royal (Dick) School
of Veterinary Studies

Red Squirrel Post-Mortem Examinations – Updated March 2025:

If you find a dead red squirrel it may be possible for it to be sent for post-mortem examination to further our knowledge on the conservation, welfare and diseases of red squirrels. All dead red squirrels found in **Scotland** should be sent to:

Easter Bush Pathology, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
University of Edinburgh
Roslin
Midlothian
EH25 9RG

Contact: Liam.Wilson@ed.ac.uk Tel: 0131 6517310

And/or Easter Bush Pathology Reception: 0131 6517458 or ebp.enquiries@ed.ac.uk

Please ensure that you wear disposable gloves when handling dead squirrels, wash your hands thoroughly afterwards and disinfect any surfaces used.

Postage and Packaging:

The Royal Mail is able to accept diagnostic samples via the normal post within the UK. To protect public health, **it is essential that red squirrels sent for post mortem are appropriately packaged.** Royal Mail or courier services may refuse to handle an incorrectly packaged submission.

Packages must be **sent either by guaranteed next-day delivery or first-class post.** Please do not send packages on a Thursday or Friday, as the laboratory may be closed at the weekend. Please either alert the lab that you are sending a red squirrel for post-mortem or inform your local Red Squirrel Conservation Officer so that they can notify the lab.

If it is not possible to post the red squirrel the same day that it is found, carcasses should be ideally **stored refrigerated**, but only if you have the appropriate facilities (e.g., at a wildlife centre, veterinary surgery). **DO NOT use domestic fridges** – carcasses *may* carry dangerous infectious agents including some which may be transmissible to people. Carcasses may be frozen if refrigeration is not possible or if there may be a delay in posting the squirrel (e.g. storage over a weekend).

Any direct contact with the dead squirrel should be avoided:

- Wear disposable gloves, wash hands thoroughly and disinfect any in-contact surfaces after packaging
- To pick up the dead squirrel, place your hand within a plastic bag, pick up the carcass with covered hand and invert the bag over the carcass and tie the bag securely
- **Use a separate bag for each carcass.**
- The **secured bag must then be wrapped in plenty of absorbent material** e.g., kitchen roll, which then must be **placed in another two securely sealed plastic bags** (which should not have the ventilation holes common to many carrier bags.)
- **Please contact either Liam Wilson/Easter Bush Pathology prior to packaging and sending a suspected leprosy case, as these carry additional requirements.**



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The package should then be **placed within a crush proof container**, such as a rigid margarine tub (this does not have to be done separately for each squirrel, as long as each specimen is properly bagged and labelled), then with an **accompanying submission form** (name, address and telephone number of senders; date, time & location found; storage conditions; suspected cause of death), packaged within a jiffy post-bag, or a substantial brown paper parcel.

The senders name and address should be written clearly on the back of the package and the package MUST be labelled as follows:

BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE - CATEGORY B - HANDLE WITH CARE

Also, a hazard diamond shape containing the number UN3373 (as below) must also be included on the package.



**BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE
CATEGORY B**

Although you will have used an inverted plastic bag and disposable gloves, please remember to **wash your hands after dealing with the dead red squirrel and disinfect any surfaces used.**

PRIVACY STATEMENT - *Information about you: how we use it and with whom we share it:*

The University of Edinburgh, Easter Bush Pathology only uses the personal data you provide to return the completed post-mortem report to yourselves and to seek clarification on matters relating to the submission (such as the location the squirrel was found). This is a legitimate interest to ensure that the information entering the mortality monitoring database is as accurate as possible; all data is anonymised prior to inclusion in this dataset. Personal data is retained until completion of the case and inclusion of the respective information in this dataset (up to approximately 6 months duration), after which the personal data will be securely deleted.

Tissue samples are taken as part of this monitoring programme which are archived and may be used for further scientific investigation beyond initial diagnosis, either for internal University research projects or with external scientific collaborators (dependent on appropriate ethical approval).

This Privacy Statement is continued at: [Continued privacy notice | Data Protection \(https://data-protection.ed.ac.uk/notice\)](https://data-protection.ed.ac.uk/notice).



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Red Squirrel Post-Mortem Submission Form

Date squirrel found:

Location found & grid ref:

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Treatment (if any, e.g. frozen or refrigerated):

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Any indications of cause of death:

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Additional comments:

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Finder's name and postal address:

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.....

Email: **Tel/mobile:**

Sender's name and postal address (if different to above):

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.....

Email: **Tel/mobile:**

Please complete this form and include together with the appropriately packaged dead red squirrel.

A separate copy of this form should be completed for each squirrel sent.

By completing this form, you are indicating that you consent to retention of your contact details in the manner, and for the purposes, described above.