

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels update.

December 2009

Since the launch in April the project has been steadily building up a network of partners and supporters in Tayside. Several estate owners and managers across Perthshire and Angus have been involved in submitting bids for grant aid for grey control. At this time Scone Palace has been successful in its bid for funding and seven more proposals are awaiting news of, hopefully, their funding success.

The next round of Scottish Rural Development Programme bids is due for submission by the 11th January 2010. The project is presently working with a range of land managers in an effort to meet this deadline. The new streamlined system will allow time for submissions to be made if an interest is expressed within the next two weeks.

In terms of timescale for grant awards; it has been declared that no contract will begin on 1st January 2010 unless it has been approved by 31/12. This means that for the next year's submissions contracts will not begin until 1st January 2011. However, the project is still keen that interested parties still look to getting their bid in sooner rather than wait until later in the year. Anyone seeking advice should call the project officer on 01382 431849 or e-mail redsquirrel.project@dundee.gov.uk

Growing numbers of the public are playing their part by submitting sightings to the various websites (dunderedsquirrels.co.uk, angusredsquirrels.co.uk & perthkinrossredsquirrels.co.uk). This has been very effective in pinpointing the worst affected grey invasion areas and allowing the project to direct its conservation efforts.

The project has appointed a regional Grey Control Officer for Tayside. His name is Craig Wilson and he will be working in Perthshire particularly between Blairgowrie and Dunkeld and from there up to Pitlochry. Plans are underway to recruit a similar officer for Angus who will work from Rattray eastwards.

SWT has also advertised for a Project Officer to work in the west of the country, mainly around the National Park but also over towards the Cowal Peninsula. They will start work in the spring and allow the project to cover the country coast to coast both north and south of the Central Belt. It is also attending to the grey problem around Aberdeen with the recent appointment of a project officer for Aberdeenshire and Moray.

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4/12/2009