

Autumn news from the Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership

New Trap Loan Scheme, free grey control training, events,
plus the latest from MISE on their red squirrel research projects



Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership News

Newyddion Partneriaeth Gwiwerod Coch Canolbarth Cymru



Trap Loan Scheme Up and Running!



In an exciting new development for the Mid Wales Red Squirrel Project, Welsh Government funding has been awarded to help support community action across the red squirrel focal area. The funding from Environment Wales, a partnership in the voluntary sector that supports voluntary action to protect and improve the environment, has enabled the MWRSP to roll out a Trap Loan Scheme. The Scheme offers free loan of trapping equipment for grey squirrel control to residents and landowners within the mid Wales red squirrel focal area. Training in trapping technique is also available through the Scheme.



The funding will also provide a new website for the MWRSP, with a facility to report red squirrel sightings. This represents a significant step forward for red squirrel conservation in mid Wales and hopefully heralds the start of a brighter future for red squirrels in our area.

Trap Loan Scheme

WANTED!

Willing volunteers to

Local Co-ordinators

If you want to take part in the Trap loan Scheme, please contact your nearest Local Co-ordinator

Rhandirmwyn, Matthew Hand
01550 760122 / m.hand100@btinternet.com

Llanwrtyd Wells, Geoff Stickland
01591 610637 /
geoffstickland@googlemail.com

Llanfair Clydogau, Ben Allen
07814 280195 / ben_allen303@yahoo.co.uk

Lampeter, Adrian Hyde
01570 421288 / nightjar@live.co.uk

If you are interested in becoming a Co-ordinator for the Trap Loan Scheme in your local area, contact Becky on b.hulme@welshwildlife.org / 07972 201202

assemble information packs for the Trap Loan Scheme.

Volunteers will be provided with folders, a series of printed sheets, and an example copy of an information pack. The sheets will need to be positioned in the folders in the correct order and some sheets need stapling together.

Simple work, but much needed! Any assistance would be most welcome.



Mewn datblygiad newydd cyffrous i Brosiect Gwiwerod Coch Canolbarth Cymru (PGCCC), dyfarnwyd arian gan Lywodraeth Cymru tuag at weithredu cymunedol ar draws yr ardal lle mae canolbwyntio ar y wiwer goch. Mae'r arian oddi wrth Amgylchedd Cymru, sef partneriaeth yn y sector gwirfoddol sy'n cefnogi gweithredu gwirfoddol i warchod a gwella'r amgylchedd, yn golygu y gall MWRSP ddechrau ar Gynllun Benthycia Trapiau. Bydd y Cynllun yn cynnig cyfarpar trapio gwiwerod llwyd ar fenthyc am ddim i drigolion a thirfeddianwyr yn yr ardal lle mae canolbwyntio ar y wiwer goch yn y Canolbarth. Hefyd, mae hyfforddiant trapio ar gael o dan y Cynllun.



Yn ogystal, bydd yr arian yn darparu gwefan newydd i PGCCC, lle bydd modd cofnodi gwiwerod goch sy'n cael eu gweld. Mae hyn yn gam pwysig ymlaen i gadwraeth gwiwerod coch yn y Canolbarth, a gobeithio y bydd yn golygu dyfodol sicrach i'r gwiwerod hyn yn ein hardal.

Free training in grey squirrel control
Hyfforddiant am ddim i reoli gwiwerod llwyd

Saturday 13th December @ 9:30 - 11:30am, Dinas, Llanwrtyd, Sadwrn 13 Rhagfyr

Saturday 13th December @ 1:00-3:00pm, Nant y Bai, Rhandirmwyn, Sadwrn 13 Rhagfyr

Sunday 14th December @ 1:00 - 3:00pm, Long Wood Llanfair Clydogau, Sul 14 Rhagfyr

Places are limited and will be allocated to Trap Loan Scheme members initially.

Contact Becky to book your place b.hulme@welshwildlife.org

Rhoddir blaenoriaeth i aelodau'r Cynllun Benthycu Trapiau

Cysylltwch â Becky i wneud yn siŵr o le b.hulme@welshwildlife.org



Matthew Hand

Why Conservation Starts at Home

I have taken on the role of voluntary local co-ordinator for the MWRSP in the Rhandirmwyn area. All my life I have worked in the countryside and I have lived with my wife, Jane, in mid-Wales for the last 30 years, I have been a forester, fish farmer and finally, for 12 years I was in firearm licensing covering Montgomeryshire.

When I attended the first meeting of the red squirrel project and met Becky, I realised that this was a project that could succeed and be of benefit to future generations.

Perhaps we as a community could leave the visible legacy of a healthy, viable red squirrel population and prove that conservation really does start at home. My personal aim is to see a red squirrel in my little wood in the centre of Rhandirmwyn, and when that happens I shall buy everyone in my village that has helped me with the scheme a drink in the pub – but we need to get a move on as I am becoming older and poorer every year!

On the August bank holiday my wife Jane and I manned a small stand in the Community Association tent at the Rhandirmwyn show, luckily blessed with fair weather, there was a good attendance on the day and we had a number of enquiries about the scheme, some volunteering to help and others wanting more background information on the project. Looking at a map of the area and the work involved it looks a mammoth task of almost insurmountable size, but it isn't, as with all apparent insurmountable problems in life you just get stuck in at the start and work forward, and then suddenly it becomes attainable.

Which is why every single person that helps is important, however small or insignificant it may seem to you, it is another step forward for the project and a

helping hand for our native red squirrel. Please try and spread the word of what we are going to achieve and reassure those that are sceptical; this is an opportunity for our communities to work together and achieve this legacy for the future. Given the options of pointing out a red squirrel in my woodland canopy to a grandchild or showing them a stuffed one on a shelf and saying

"We had those here once, but did nothing about saving them".

There is only one acceptable option.

GOOD NEWS FOR RED SQUIRRELS FROM CUMBRIA



Over 50 people congregated in pubs and village halls across mid Wales in July to find out about how local people can act to save the red squirrel in mid Wales. The 3 Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership events, held in Tregaron, Rhandirmwyn and Llanwrtyd Wells featured guest speaker, Jackie Foott from Cumbria who helps to co-ordinate the networking organisation, Northern Red Squirrels (England). Jackie spoke of how action on-the-ground to control the numbers of invasive grey squirrels has worked to bring back the red squirrel from the verge of extinction in south Cumbria,

where the 'experts' had written off this native mammal as unviable, faced with competition for resources and disease from the vast numbers of grey squirrels.

Red Squirrel Officer, Becky Hulme from the South and West Wales Wildlife Trust was delighted with the response from local people: "I was really pleased with the degree of concern for the red squirrel that came across at the events. Local people really do have a love for the red squirrel, the older generation have fond memories of red squirrels from when they were children, before the grey squirrel colonised mid Wales; there's a lot of enthusiasm from the whole community to bring the red squirrel back from the brink. Jackie helped us understand that this is one conservation issue that local people can actually have a positive effect on. Reds are now a common sight in gardens and in woodland in south Cumbria, and it is this dynamic that we want to replicate here in mid Wales. It's only with concerted community action to reduce the numbers of grey squirrels in the area that we have a hope of saving the red squirrel in mid Wales. From the reception that we have had at the events over the weekend, I really do think that red squirrel conservation is achievable in mid Wales."

Come and find out about Red Squirrels **Dewch i ddysgu am Wiwerod Coch**

Following the success of our events in July, there are 2 further talks are scheduled. Come along and find out



Community Action for Red Squirrels

Cymunedau'n gweithredu dros y wiwer goch



Sunday 30th November @ 15:30 Dydd Sul 30 Tachwedd

The Dolaucothi Arms, Pumsaint

ALL WELCOME / CROESO I BAWB

Come along and find out about how you can help red squirrels in your area

Dewch draw i ddarganfod sut i gynorthwyo'r wiwer goch yn eich ardal

Contact / Cyswllt Becky 07813 170676 / b.hulme@welshwildlife.org

about the plight of red squirrels in mid Wales, the new Trap Loan Scheme and how you can help red squirrels in your area:

Dewch i glywed am gyflwr gwiwerod coch yn y Canolbarth, y Cynllun Benthycia Trapiau a sut gallwch chi helpu gwiwerod coch yn eich ardal:

Sunday 30th November

@ 3:30pm

Dydd Sul 30 Tachwedd

Tafarn, Dolau Cothi Arms, Pumsaint

Sunday 18th January

@ 3pm

Dydd Sul 18 Ionawr

New Inn, Llanddewi Brefi

We hope to see you there!

Gobeithiwn eich gweld yno!

Know Your Squirrels! Adnabod Eich Gwiwerod!

Everyone thinks that they know what a red and a grey squirrel looks like, but can you really you spot the difference? Take a look at the images below.



The animal to the left is a red squirrel, whereas the squirrel to the right is a grey! Despite its name, the red squirrel's coat varies in colour from a fine russet or chestnut colour in summer to dark brown or even greyish in winter. Although the grey squirrel is much larger than the red squirrel and has a more robust build, variations in colour in are common for both species, so be aware and take heed of the following ID advice:



Red Squirrel

Body size: 25 cm long

Tail size: 20 cm

Weight: 300 grams

Distinctive feature: Ear tufts, which are more prominent in winter

Y Wiwer Goch

Maint y corff: hyd at 25 cm o hyd

Maint y gynffon: hyd at 20 cm

Pwysau: 300 gram

Nodwedd nodedig: Clustiau blewog, yn fwy amlwg yn y gaeaf



Grey Squirrel

Body size: 30 cm long

Tail size: 24 cm

Weight: 540 to 660 grams +

Distinctive feature: White fringe on the tail, creating a 'halo' effect.

Y Wiwer Lwyd

Maint y corff: 30 cm o hyd

Maint y gynffon: 24 cm

Pwysau: 540 - 660 gram +

Nodwedd nodedig: Ymyl gwyn i'r gynffon, yn creu effaith 'eurgylch'.

Please report any red squirrel sightings to Becky
on b.hulme@welshwildlife.org / 07972 201202

Competition to Create a Healthy Squirrel Recipe

It's low in fat, low in food miles and completely free range. In fact, some claim that the grey squirrel is about as ethical a dish as it is possible to serve up for dinner. And grey squirrel is one of the dishes on the menu at the



Taste of London Awards.

Inspired by tradition, four top chefs have each revealed a 'forgotten food' they're set to champion at this year's Taste of London on 20-23 November at Tobacco Dock. The chefs will be celebrating the diversity of lesser known ingredients, using them to excite the nation's pallet. Pascal Aussignac says of using squirrel 'it's an unused and freely available product – which is sourced sustainably. The texture and flavour of the meat is very similar to wild rabbit which provides an interesting angle to play with when creating a dish.'

'Mammals in a Sustainable Environment' Project Work Gwaith Prosiect 'Mamaliaid mewn Amgylchedd Cynaliadwy'

"Mammals in a Sustainable Environment" (MISE) is a project funded by the European Regional Development Fund under the Ireland Wales Programme 2007-2013 (INTERREG IVA) that aims to foster involvement of communities in Wales and Ireland in mammal conservation, Read more about the MISE project here (<http://www.vwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/mise-project>). The Vincent Wildlife Trust is one of the Welsh partners, and has been working with the MWRSP for 3 years, carrying out red squirrel surveys and helping with talks with local communities.

Mae "Mamaliaid mewn Amgylchedd Cynaliadwy" (MISE) yn brosiect wedi'i ariannu gan Gronfa Ddatblygu Rhanbarthol Ewrop fel rhan o raglen Cymru ac Iwerddon 2007-2013 (INTERREG IVA) sydd â'r nod o feithrin cyfranogiad cymunedau yng Nghymru ac Iwerddon yng ngwaith cadwraeth mamaliaid. Mae rhagor o fanylion am y prosiect yn <http://www.vwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/mise-project>. Mae Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Vincent yn un o'r partneriaid yng Nghymru, ac mae'n cydweithio â Phartneriaeth Gwiwerod Coch y Canolbarth ers tair blynedd, gan gynnal arolygon gwiwerod coch a helpu i ymgysylltu â chymunedau lleol.



**Mamaliaid mewn
Amgylchedd Cynaliadwy**
**Mammals in a Sustainable
Environment**



**The Vincent Wildlife
Trust**



**SOUTHERN & EASTERN
Regional Assembly**
Promoting Our Region



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013
Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



Our live-trapping survey in Cwm Berwyn forest near Tregaron ran for 3 weeks in July. 22 volunteers took part, contributing an amazing 240 hours of their time.

After our initial luck with a red squirrel on the first day of the trapping, we had to wait for 5 days before we trapped another; at which point we caught 2 in one day (a male, and a pregnant female). We then trapped a third individual on the following day. These were weighed, tagged and a small hair sample taken for DNA analysis. All 3 individuals were of a genetic strain known as "wc3" found previously in mid Wales, and in other locations including Clochaenog forest in NE Wales. It was great to find evidence that they are breeding, although we were disappointed to trap only 3 individuals in the whole of the survey, compared with 10 individuals in a similar study last year in Bryn Arau Duon forest.

We also trapped and despatched 6 grey squirrels during the survey, all of them males who were probably dispersing from their breeding areas further down the valley. It was disappointing to learn that greys are also using this plantation, and emphasises the importance of grey squirrel control if we are serious about saving our mid Wales

reds.

Thanks again to everyone who came along to help out with the survey, particularly those who displayed relentless enthusiasm despite not seeing a single red squirrel on their visits!

Radio-tracking Reds near Cwrt-y-Cadno



During November the MISE project will be radio-tracking a number of red squirrels in Bryn Arau Duon, a coniferous plantation which lies between Cwrt-y-Cadno and Llyn Brianne where 10 individuals were identified during a survey last summer. This amazing photo of a red squirrel was taken last autumn by Julian Richards, a neighbour to Bryn Arau Duon. This beautiful animal is getting ready for the winter months by stocking up on hazelnuts.

The aim of the study is to find out more about how the reds are using this conifer woodland. The work will be carried out by licence-holders Don MacPherson and Huw Denman who will train a small group of MISE volunteers in radio-tracking techniques.

Although the coniferous upland forests of mid Wales are home to the remaining population of red squirrels, these are not necessarily the habitat of choice for the reds. The reds are simply there because they are better able than greys to exploit the limited food sources available within coniferous woodland. If greys were not present, the reds would be dispersing into the surrounding woodlands and gardens and making full use of other food sources. It is fantastic to see this red squirrel, pictured above, feeding in broadleaved habitat outside the conifers next to Bryn Arau Duon, and demonstrates what-might-be in the future if the competition from greys is removed. If any one else out there has any other photos of red squirrels, we would be delighted to see them!

Defnyddio radio i ddilyn y Cochion ger Cwrtycadno

Yn ystod mis Tachwedd bydd y prosiect, Mamaliaid mewn Amgylchedd Cynaliadwy (MISE), yn defnyddio radio i ddilyn nifer o wiwerod coch ym Mryn Arau Duon. Cafwyd hyd i ddeg unigolyn yn y blanhigfa gonwydd hon rhwng Cwrtycadno a Llyn Brianne yn ystod arolwg yr haf diwethaf. Tynnwyd y llun



anhygoel hwn o wiwer goch yr hydref diwethaf gan Julian Richards, sy'n byw yn y cyffiniau. Mae'r anifail hardd yn paratoi ar gyfer y gaeaf wrth gasglu cnau cyll.

Nod yr astudiaeth yw darganfod mwy am y modd y mae'r cochion yn defnyddio'r coetir conwydd hwn. Mae'r gwaith yn cael ei wneud gan ddeiliaid trwydded, Don MacPherson a Huw Denman, a fydd yn hyfforddi grŵp bychan o wirfoddolwyr MISE ar sut i ddilyn gwiwerod trwy gyfrwng radio.

Er taw coedwigoedd conwydd ucheldir y Canolbarth yw unig gartref y gwiwerod coch yng Nghymru erbyn hyn, nid yma y mae eu cynefin dewisol o angenrheidrwydd. Mae'r cochion yma am eu bod yn gallu ymdopi'n well na'r llwydion mewn coetir conwydd lle mae'r cyflenwad bwyd yn gyfyngedig. Oni bai am y llwydion, fe fyddai'r cochion yn ymwasgaru i'r coetiroedd a'r gerddi o amgylch i fanteisio ar ffynonellau bwyd eraill. Mor hyfryd yw gweld y wiwer goch hon yn bwydo mewn cynefin collddail y tu hwnt i'r conwydd. Mae'n olygfa a allai fod yn gyffredin yn y dyfodol, heb fygythiad gan y llwydion. Os oes gan rywun arall luniau o wiwerod coch, byddem wrth ein bodd yn eu gweld!

Bryn Mawr

A trapping session earlier this autumn in Bryn Mawr near Llanfair Clydogau resulted in a new red squirrel capture, thought to be one of the young of the female who was captured on camera earlier in the year. A hair sample has been sent to the Waterford Institute of Technology for DNA analysis. Until we are sure that the greys have been removed from the area, the feeder has been taken down to prevent

any risk of disease transmission.



Yn ystod sesiwn o drapio ddechrau'r hydref ym Mryn Mawr ger Llanfair Clydogau, canfuwyd gwiwer goch nas gwelwyd o'r blaen. Credwn taw ei mam oedd y wiwer a welwyd ar gamera yn y cyffiniau yn gynharach eleni. Anfonwyd sampl o'r blew i Sefydliad Technoleg Waterford am ddadansoddiad DNA. I wneud yn siŵr nad oes berygl o drosglwyddo clefydau, cafodd y bwydwr ei gymryd oddi yno hyd nes cael gwared ar y gwiwerod llwyd yn yr ardal.

Nant-y-Bai

MISE volunteers continued to check and re-bait hair tubes in Nant-y-Bai forest, Rhandirmwyn, until the end of July. Unfortunately, the hair samples which were collected from the line of tubes nearest the village have now been confirmed as grey squirrel. Reds have been known to avoid using hair tubes if greys are present, so the reds may still be around but not venturing into the hair tubes. A recent sighting of a red squirrel in a garden in Rhandirmwyn provide some evidence of this. Our findings from the hair tube survey continue to emphasise the need for a network of grey squirrel controllers in the Rhandirmwyn area.

Seeing Red

Polly Walker-Penn, a MISE volunteer, recently chose the conservation of the mid Wales red squirrel as the focus for her MPhil project at Aberystwyth University. In her display "Seeing Red" at Small World Theatre in Cardigan, visitors were encouraged to reflect on the conflicts we face in the conservation of our native species. Polly placed a small



caravan into the main atrium of the theatre, and streamed live images from a red squirrel feeder in Bryn Arau Duon forest onto a large screen in front of the caravan.

Visitors were invited to spend time in the caravan, watching for red squirrels and other wildlife. A range of thought-provoking material and information encouraged visitors to consider the value judgements we have to make if we choose to conserve our native wildlife.

Visitor Feedback:

"Its very hard to leave this space and all the thoughts it provokes - very thoughtful work that I felt able to be part of, including much debate about what is important in our 'world'."



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