



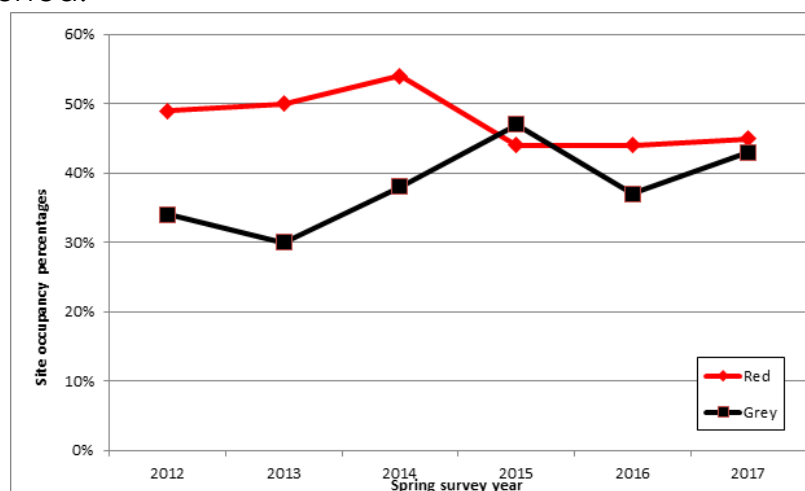
Bi-annual Meeting of Red Squirrels Northern England with Westmorland Red Squirrels and Grasmere Red Squirrel Group
Lake District Visitor Centre at Brockhole
27 September 2017
Extract from Note of the Meeting

1. Working with the British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC)

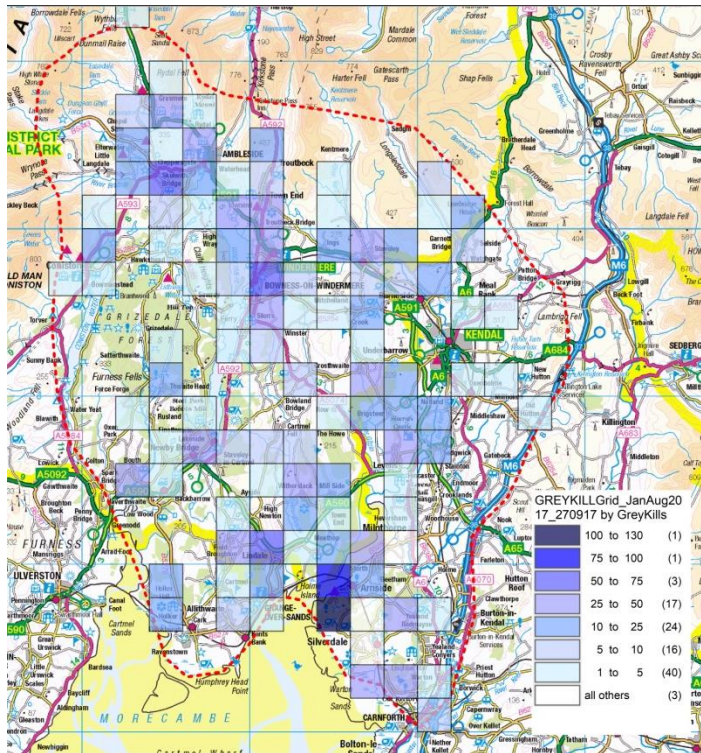
Mike Thornley described the services BASC could offer in setting up certificated courses to prove weapon competency. These can be designed to meet our specific needs and we agreed that we would prepare an outline programme for subsequent agreement with Mike and the BASC trainers. All agreed this was an opportunity to grasp to increase our grey control capacity, subject, of course to landowner agreement.

2. RSNE Report

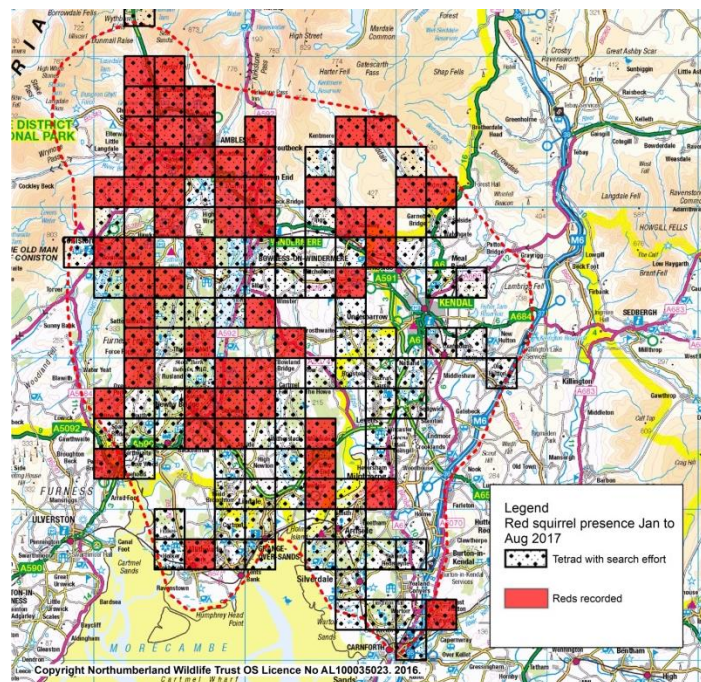
Simon O'Hare summarised their Spring Monitoring Report and the records reported to RSNE in 2017. Across the north of England 8907 grey squirrels had been reported culled. Almost 2000 of these culls were recorded in the Westmorland and Grasmere areas –a great testament to the work of our landowners, volunteers and RSNE rangers. Red range remained stable, though there had been fewer sightings in the M6 corridor. But encouragingly, several sightings in north Lancashire had been reported.



Westmorland Red Squirrels



Grey Cull reports January to August 2017



Red Sighting reports January to August 2017

3. Lone Working Policy

Bob summarised Westmorland's Lone Working Policy and the obligations of the charity, area coordinators and individuals to minimise risk and protect personal safety. Advice is available if needed and the completion of risk assessments is essential. Everyone should take sensible precautions when working alone by carrying a mobile and a whistle and leaving route details with a buddy or family member.

4. Reports

a. UK Squirrel Accord

Bob summarised the discussion at the Accord's Committee the previous day. Good progress is being made on the grey squirrel fertility control programme carried out at the Animal and Plant Health Agency's centre near York. The Accord's Autumn Meeting on 19 October is being held at the centre. All are welcome. Much of the meeting had focussed on developing a comprehensive communications strategy:

- Between Accord Signatories
- With the wider public
- With Donors

The meeting had also discussed Accord membership with the prospect of equal representation from governmental bodies, landowners and voluntary bodies.

b. National Trust

Bob described the work NRS was doing to achieve greater consistency of funding for work on the Trust's estate in the north of England. A meeting with senior Trust officers was planned. Meanwhile the Trust has launched an online appeal among its members and the public to raise £30,000 a year for red squirrel conservation on its Lake District properties, which we welcomed.

c. Area Reports

Ambleside: Quietist year on record for greys reported and culled. But we're only as good as the reports we get so continued publicity about reporting is essential.

Arnside and Silverdale: In contrast, this area is "thick with greys" though great work has been achieved by volunteers and

Westmorland Red Squirrels

contractors this year. The cooperation of landowners including RSPB has been much appreciated and we're reaping the rewards. A red was sighted at Milnthorpe, which was encouraging. The considerable support of Holgates caravan parks was noted and such sites will be a focus for attention in future as visitors feeding greys isn't helping.

Crosthwaite and Underbarrow: Grey numbers considerably down this year but no red sightings reported either. The work carried out by volunteers and contractors, notably Jeff Scovell, seems to be making a real difference.

Grange over Sands and Witherslack: A good year with extensive grey control carried out in and around Grange and Lindale. Several red sightings reported.

Grasmere: Double the number of greys seen compared with 2016, 85 per cent of which were shot. Reds are doing well with many reports even in the centre of the village. There were eight recorded road kills and one confirmed squirrel pox victim.

Kendal: Now beginning to make good progress after struggling to increase trapping capacity.

Rusland: Few greys reported and culled so work needed to assess whether they're thin on the ground or under-reported (probably the latter) A good number of reds reported though which suggests the publicity around the Rusland's Reds project is raising awareness.

Windermere: Grey numbers down in a year when they were late to come into the traps.

5. Future Priorities

- Continued control through trapping and shooting as research evolves to add other tools to the toolbox. To include exploring future collaboration with BASC.
- Attention to fundraising, ideally in collaboration with like-minded organisations, but also with the private sector.
- Continued publicity to reporting greys and reds to maintain our 'intelligence-led' approach.
- Exploring the scope to work with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and volunteers in north Lancashire to establish a volunteer group there.