



## Westmorland Red Squirrels

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# Annual Review 2022

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**Geoff Hetherington, Chairman**

We have experienced a difficult year. We seem to overcome one obstacle when another presents itself. The greatest challenge we currently contend with is the mass felling of larch trees infected or threatened by *Phytophthora ramorum* disease. These plantations have been the mainstay of our red squirrels' struggle to survive against the

relentless tide of grey squirrels. Landowners are obliged to remove diseased trees but also fell the entire stand, whether diseased or not. To exacerbate the problem, these operations are often happening during the red squirrel breeding season. This is beyond comprehension when we are trying to save one of the UK's most iconic indigenous species.

To cap it all, one government agency and one charity sector landowner have asked us to suspend grey squirrel control, despite being signatories to the UK Squirrel Accord. We are making the case for their re-engagement to secure

landscape scale management with neighbouring owners.

We continue to assess damage by Storm Arwen. Numerous red sightings are reported, though numbers are down on 2021. Some areas have 'lost' their reds while others have 'gained', suggesting displacement due to the storm's disruption and larch clearance.

Finally, thank you to our members and volunteers. Without you, we could not continue. The reds would be lost in south Cumbria and north Lancashire, which in turn would have a knock-on effect in north Cumbria and beyond into Scotland. You are all very important in this fight.

*Making the future safe for our red squirrels*

# Westmorland Red Squirrels in 2022

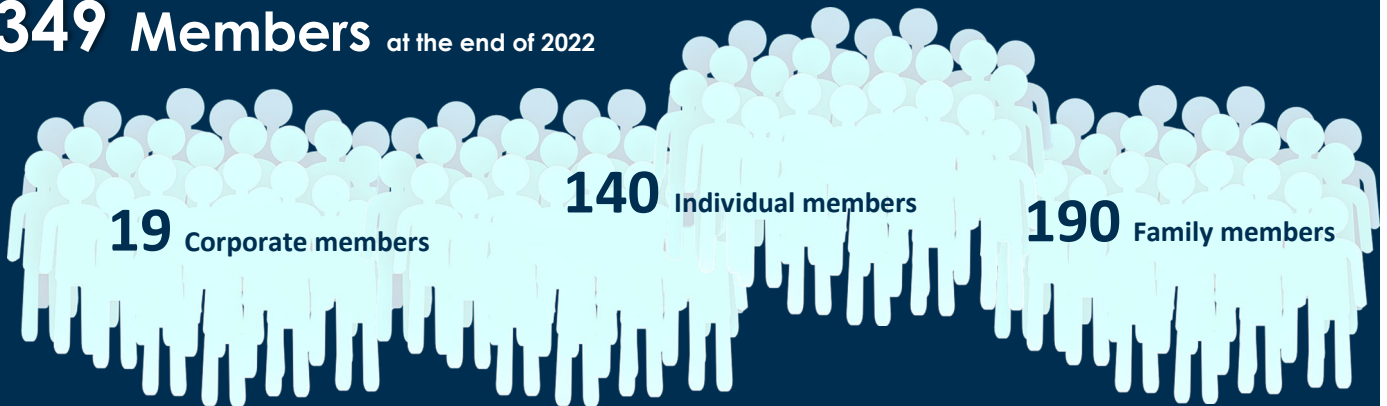


**310** Red squirrel sightings



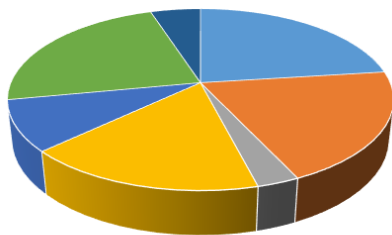
**4217** Greys caught or shot

## 349 Members at the end of 2022



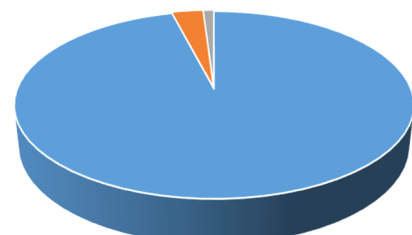
## Financials Percentages for the 2022 calendar year

2022 Income



■ Membership - 23% ■ Donations - 20% ■ Collection Boxes - 3%  
■ Sponsorship - 17% ■ Gift Aid - 9% ■ Fundraising - 23%  
■ Grants - 5%

2022 Expenditure



■ Red Squirrel Conservation & Grey Control - 96%  
■ Administration & Insurance - 3%  
■ Publicity & Merchandise - 1%

Our most recently published accounts for the financial year 2021/22 show income as £33,448 and expenditure as £32,057.



**989** Followers on Twitter



**388** E-News subscribers



# Events, meetings, courses and publicity



## We attended:

- 6 Internal meetings
- 6 External meetings
- 9 Zoom meetings and webinars
- 3 Online conferences
- 3 Talks given to local groups
- 2 Media interviews
- 6 Local shows
- 2 Courses

## Thank you

In addition to the support given by our members, we acknowledge with great thanks the financial and in-kind contributions from the following organisations and individuals:

- Barnes Charitable Trust
- Cedar Manor Hotel
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- Dallam Tower Estate
- DDS Advisory Ltd
- Forestry England
- Friends of the Lake District
- Gaynor Sports
- Graythwaite Estate
- Holgates Caravan Parks
- Ian Gregg
- John Strutt Conservation Foundation
- Kendal College
- Kendal Natural History Society
- Lake District Estates
- Lake District National Park
- Larkrigg Riding School
- Levens Hall
- Linthwaite House (Leeu Collection)
- Low Sizergh Barn
- National Trust
- New Barns Caravan Park
- Pure Leisure
- The Birds' Bistro
- Westmorland County Agricultural Society
- Woodland Trust

## Working with Forestry England

In last year's review, we foresaw closer working with Forestry England (FE) on red squirrel monitoring and grey squirrel control. Important in the aftermath of damage caused by Storm Arwen and the impact of widespread felling of Larch due to Phytophthora ramorum disease, we've been grateful for more active reporting of red squirrels by FE

rangers and for more intensive monitoring by our volunteers. In a further initiative, two of our trained expert shooters have been authorised to participate in a pilot project that if successful, would permit volunteers to shoot greys on purpose-designed feeding stations. The two-year trial, if successful, could see more intensive control of greys in FE forests, reducing tree damage by bark stripping and lessening competition with reds.

## Looking ahead

In January 2023, the UK Squirrel Accord published its long-awaited England Red Squirrel Action Plan. The core aims of the 5-year Plan are to:

1. Protect, identify and strengthen red squirrel populations across the current range;
2. Expand the current range of red squirrels;
3. Support and improve collaborative action at all levels;
4. Promote better understanding and support for red squirrel conservation across England.

Westmorland Red Squirrels is represented on the stakeholder steering group responsible for identifying lead agencies and timelines for each action.

In January 2024, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is expected to conclude its 5-year research programme on grey squirrel fertility control for the Accord. The study aims to produce an immuno-contraceptive that greys can take orally through a species-specific delivery mechanism. Hopes are high that this will provide an effective, less labour intensive, non-lethal method for managing grey squirrels. In 2023, experts at APHA will be carrying out field trials in collaboration with our volunteers in the Arnside and Silverdale area and with our colleagues in the Grasmere Red Squirrel Group.



## Westmorland Red Squirrels

Our thanks to **Cumbria Wildlife Trust** for printing this Annual Review and to **Judy Thomas** for the use of her images.

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