

One of Scotland's remaining red squirrels Stephen Willis for Scottish Wildlife Trust

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One of the UK’s most well-loved but rapidly declining small mammals is to receive a boost, thanks to almost £2.5million from HLF.

Saving Scotland’s Red Squirrels – Developing Community Action aims to protect and secure the future of the native red squirrel population with the help of local communities across Scotland.

Three quarters of the UK’s 160,000 red squirrels live in Scotland. The main threat to native squirrels comes from competition with invasive non-native grey squirrels and the spread of the deadly squirrelpox virus.

Innovative partnership

Through an eight-year trial, an innovative partnership comprising Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Land & Estates, RSPB Scotland and the Red Squirrel Survival Trust, has established that it is possible to halt the red squirrels’ decline.

[quote=Lucy Casot, Head of HLF in Scotland]“We’ve been impressed with Scottish Wildlife Trust’s collaborative approach to help save this beautiful species and look forward to seeing the project progress in the coming months and

years.”[/quote]

Dr Mel Tonkin, Saving Scotland’s Red Squirrels Project Manager said: “Red squirrels are one of Scotland’s most-loved species. Thanks to National Lottery players, we will be able to empower communities to help protect not just their local red squirrels, but major populations of the species in Scotland, and ensure that future generations can continue to see these special animals.”

The wide-ranging project will adopt different approaches in different areas of Scotland, from working to maintain "grey squirrel-free zones", to monitoring squirrel numbers and creating networks of local people. It will also spread understanding and appreciation of the risks red squirrels face, and how to successfully protect them.

Lucy Casot, Head of HLF in Scotland, said: “We’ve been impressed with Scottish Wildlife Trust’s collaborative approach to help save this beautiful species and look forward to seeing the project progress in the coming months and years.”



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A red squirrel in Scotland Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography

Saving the red squirrel