

UK Squirrel Accord update: May 2019

The UK Squirrel Accord (UKSA) brings together 37 organisations from the public and private sector. One of the main aims of the Accord is to identify and promote tools to decrease the impact of the alien invasive grey squirrels on native broadleaf woodlands and on red squirrels. Broadleaf woodlands in the UK have been greatly damaged by grey squirrels' ring barking of trees. Grey squirrels have



also been responsible for the decimation of the red squirrel through squirrel pox infection and competing for habitat and food. Without effective control, the grey squirrels will increase in numbers and our future generations might never see stands of mature trees and their associated biodiversity. The UK Squirrel Accord is driving the funding for a five-year project, facilitated by Defra, to develop and deliver an oral contraceptive for grey squirrels. Laboratory research at the world-renowned Animal Plant Health Health Agency (APHA) has shown that an orally delivered contraceptive tested in laboratory rats was effective to reduce the numbers of animals reproducing. APHA is testing whether the same contraceptive will be effective on grey squirrels. The

project is also trialing species-specific hoppers to deliver the oral contraceptives to grey squirrels only.

The practical and enduring benefits the project could deliver are significant - an effective, safe, long-lasting oral contraceptive that can be delivered to the required proportion of the target grey population, relieving pressure on broadleaf woodland and the native red squirrel population. Oral contraceptives could also be used to control several other overabundant wildlife in the UK and overseas, thus complementing traditional methods to manage wildlife.



UK Squirrel Accord membership: BASC, British Red Squirrel, CLA, Confor, Defra, Duchy of Cornwall, European Squirrel Initiative, Forestry Commission England, Forestry Commission Scotland, Future Trees Trust, Institute of Chartered Foresters, Killgerm Group Ltd, National Forest Company, National Trust, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Northern Ireland Forest Service, Red Squirrel Northern England, Red Squirrel Survival Trust, Royal Forestry Society, Royal Horticultural Society, Royal Scottish Forestry Society, RSPB, Scottish Government, Scottish Land & Estates, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Small Woods Association, Sylva Foundation, The Heart of England Forest, The Tree Council, The Wildlife Trusts, Ulster Wildlife, Welsh Government, Woodland Heritage, Woodland Trust

Red Squirrel Survival Trust acts as the secretariat for the UK Squirrel Accord
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