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SQUIRREL

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The Great Storm, Its Legacy



I hope that you will enjoy reading this edition of Squirrel as it is a particularly diverse edition. We have spent some time looking backwards this year. Firstly we looked at our achievements over the last 15 years since ESI was formed and we are proud to have pushed the agenda regarding openly controlling the grey squirrel for the protection of trees and woodland fauna. Secondly, we looked back at 2 woodlands that were blown down and restocked after the October 1987 storm. One woodland had grey squirrel control and one did not and, as you would expect, the results were self-evident. Thirdly, we have had to say goodbye to one of our trustees and we looked back at the impact, the eminent Bede Howell, has had on the forestry world. It is significant and ESI will miss his sage advice and quick wit.



George Farr

However, as we approach the end of this year, we are starting to focus on the future and you will see that we are still busy across a range of activities.

We are:

- Working with the NGO to promote grey squirrel control groups across the UK to supplement the excellent control work done by BASC and the red squirrel conservation groups.
- Continuing to support Good Nature while they bring the A18 Trap through the Spring Trap Order tests and legislation.
- Continuing with funding research into a grey squirrel lure and always on the lookout for new and novel grey squirrel control methods.
- Welcoming new trustees and members of the management committee to keep our focus sharp and current.
- Reviewing our position on Pine Marten as a biological control

predator for the grey squirrel.

- Reviewing the research potential regarding the scale of the landscape impact of grey squirrel damage.

As always, ESI is indebted to its supporters for their financial and non-financial contributions and to all those who help the charity. We remain deeply grateful for your continued support.

George Farr
Chairman

Jigger Writes...

Waiting For The Invasion

As usual we get two influxes of squirrels a year. After they breed they move in looking for food and cover. When the leaves fall off in the plantations, the old summer dreys appear; I try to find these and poke them out. My employer finds quite a few when he is out in the woods and then asks me to deal with them.

This year it seemed to take longer than normal to get the squirrels down to an acceptable level i.e. not seeing or catching a squirrel. I put this down to the fact that we keep losing traps to the "Antis" etc.

Determined to stay on form, I unhooked all the traps hanging on the wall in the workshop as they will not catch squirrels there! To protect the traps, I dip them in my wife's old chip fryer oil (she seems to get a lot of that!). After draining them I set them along the trap line for speed and efficiency. It does not pay to wander around the woods with traps in your hands. I am hoping to build my traps up to two hundred again.

So, squirrels "Beware we will be ready and waiting"...



Jigger Mallett
Vermin controller at a Suffolk estate

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ESI Update - by Andrew Kendall, ESI

The time since the last newsletter has been taken up with a series of anniversaries or milestones for ESI. In June we saw the 15th anniversary of the creation of the charity and last month it was the 30 years since the Great Storm of 1987.

Both events were used by ESI to focus on its core message of the importance of grey squirrel control.

In June we held a meeting in London at which many of ESI's founders were present. It allowed us to recap our achievements over the last 15 years, but also to remind those present of our current work and new initiatives.

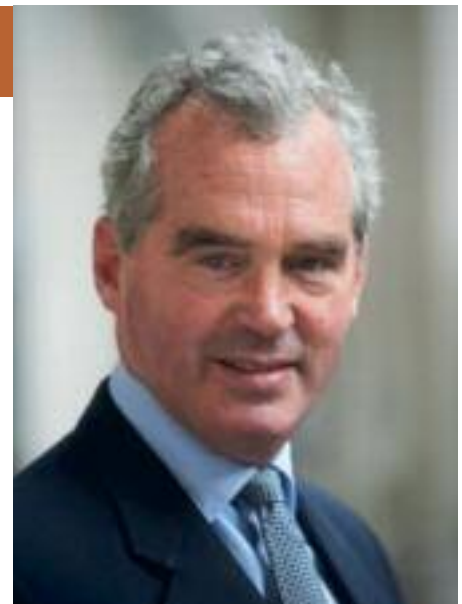
The Great Storm was commemorated with a visit to the Freechase and Lydhurst Estates in West Sussex, this is reported on more fully elsewhere in the magazine, but we are grateful to owners Sir Adrian Baillie and Lady Baillie and our own Charles Dutton for a fascinating field visit where we saw the impact of grey squirrel damage on newly planted trees.

ESI continues to achieve publicity and it is important that ESI promote its message to as wide and influential an audience as possible. We are fortunate in having a number of interested friends in the media, who appreciate and support our work.

Thanks again to the work of Charles Dutton, ESI has been active in setting up a series of squirrel control gun clubs. While most of these have been in collaboration with BASC, ESI is now looking at other partners, including the NGO (National Gamekeepers' Organisation) to spread the net even farther.

In the world of research, ESI continues to support a number of projects in the UK, Ireland and Italy. ESI has always maintained that the principles of its work must be based on sound scientific research. ESI is working with Rothamsted on an effective lure for grey squirrels and will shortly be conducting a research programme into the long-term impact of grey squirrels on our landscape.

ESI continues to support work with Good Nature in developing and promoting its trap. The Good Nature A18 has now passed the DEFRA "humane" test and is currently going through the approvals process of the EU



Andrew Kendall has been involved with ESI since its founding in 2002, and is responsible for the day to day operation of the charity.

before it can be submitted to DEFRA to be included on the Trap Order. It is hoped that this will take place around the middle of 2018.

An effective method on immunocontraception is likely to be several years away and in the meantime ESI is focussing on more short term and innovative methods of grey control, including biological ones such as the pine marten.

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Retirement Of Bede Howell OBE



Bede Howell, OBE, a founder trustee of the European Squirrel Initiative, retired at the charities June meeting after 15 years in the role.

Bede, a former Royal Forestry Society president and recipient of the Society's Gold Medal for his distinguished services to the profession, has been a tireless

and enthusiastic supporter of ESI and its work. Someone who is never reluctant to dish out "squirrel pie", Bede has provided unstinting service to the charity with his wise words, sound advice and innovative suggestions.

"He will be missed by all of us, his knowledge and indeed humour, have

enlivened many a trustees meeting" said George Farr, ESI Chairman. "I hope we haven't lost him for good and that we can continue to call upon his sage words and good advice in the future".

Bede's position as trustee has been taken by another well known forester, Andrew Falcon.

In the Press

For the full stories please visit:
www.europeansquirrelinitiative.org/news

**"A nice bit of squirrel:
should we chow down a
diet of invasive species?"**

THE GUARDIAN

**"Kill them, kill them, kill
them': the volunteer
army plotting to wipe out
Britain's grey squirrels"**

THE GUARDIAN

**"Squirrel causes power
outage for thousands
in Stamford"**

THE STAMFORD ADVOCATE

**"Fears red squirrels may
be wiped out in one of
their last British
strongholds..."**

DAILY MAIL

**"Killer grey squirrels evade
snipers to enter reds' haven"**

THE TIMES

**"The plight of the
red squirrel"**

PORTSMOUTH NEWS

Do Your Part

As our supporters will know, ESI was key in getting the American Grey Squirrel, *Sciurus carolinensis*, included in the European Union's "Invasive Alien Species (IAS)" list.

This was a landmark move for the fight against grey squirrels in Great Britain and Europe. The list includes animal and plant species considered to have the most severe effects on biodiversity, ecosystems and human activities. The inclusion of the American grey squirrel on the list makes their control within the European Union a top priority.

As part of the fight against invasive alien species the EU has released a new app, and all you need to play your part is a smartphone! The app is designed to allow users to log and record sightings of invasive species on a centralised database, so helping to build up population pictures across the EU.

The app is called Invasive Alien Species in Europe and can be downloaded from iStore (iPhone) or PlayStore (Android) for free.



Once you have downloaded the app, should you see a grey squirrel:

1. Snap a picture with your phone camera
2. Open the app
3. Select report a sighting
4. Select grey squirrel from the list of species
5. Upload your photo
6. The app will automatically record your geographical coordinates, date and time of sighting
7. Record your estimated number of individuals
8. Select terrestrial
9. Add a comment should you wish

You can also use this app to record other pesky species such as a muntjac deer, American skunk cabbage and the North American signal crayfish.

ESI Partners with the NGO

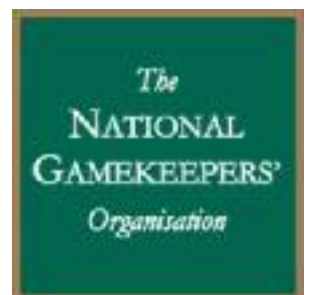
Building on the success of the squirrel control gun clubs established with BASC, ESI is now collaborating with the National Gamekeepers Organisation in an initiative which will draw upon the expertise of NGO members around the country. The aim is to create properly managed and approved gun clubs, run by resident game keepers and other NGO members to control grey squirrels by shooting. Air rifles will be used and all activities will take place with the full approval of the landowner in a controlled and regulated way.

The NGO is working with its members to create clubs with fully "vetted" members who are properly insured, trained and interviewed to ensure they meet the requirements of the club.

Permission will be obtained from the landowner, the holder of the shooting rights and the keeper. Written agreement will be entered into specifying:

- The control method
- The species to which the agreement is limited
- The type of guns involved (in this case it will be airguns)
- A requirement to communicate each time before coming onto the land
- Agree in advance the position of any feeders and hides.

"This is a great initiative and we are delighted that the NGO is working with ESI in its campaign to control grey squirrels" said Charles Dutton. "Building on the work we began with BASC this gives us access to a group of responsible and experienced shooters who can help with our task".





Havoc Played with Great Storm Replantings

At an ESI seminar and estate walk in West Sussex in October, Catherine Paice was among the visitors to witness extensive grey squirrel damage to trees planted after the Great Storm of 1987.

Great weals and gashes in the trunks of native trees reaching a critical 30+ years of growth on a West Sussex estate demonstrate the sheer scale of squirrel damage to woodland replanted after the Great Storm of 1987.

Exactly 30 years ago, great swathes of timber lay flattened like matchwood across the south of England, ravaged by the ferocious 'extratropical cyclone' that swept through the Weald on the night of October 15-16 with gusts of up to 120mph. It has been estimated that 15 million trees were destroyed.

The effort and money put into the post-storm clear-up of forests and wooded areas was considerable. Some landowners, including the National Trust, did not attempt complete clearing and replanting, believing there was a unique opportunity to study the patterns of natural regeneration after such an event, but significant planting did take place over the following 10 years. Not all of this went hand in hand with effective grey squirrel control.

Around 40 ESI supporters, including foresters, landowners, farmers, naturalists, other interested observers and attendant media gathered at the

invitation of Sir Adrian and Lady Baillie for a seminar at the Lydhurst Estate, Warringlid, to demonstrate the irreversible damage inflicted by grey squirrels on unmanaged woodland.

The owners are in a unique position to judge the impact, as they acquired the Lydhurst Estate – which is adjacent to their Freechase Estate – only last year. While grey squirrel control is routinely undertaken at Freechase, woodland had largely been left to its own devices in recent years at Lydhurst due to ill health of the previous owners. The two approaches offered a stark reminder of the damage, loss of biodiversity, potential waste and sheer cost, including taxpayer-funded grants via the Forestry Commission, of woodland that has been left unmanaged in the wake of the Great Storm, estimated by some to be as high as £600m.

Thirty years on, trees planted in the years following the cyclone are now at their most vulnerable to grey squirrel damage. Lack of proper control means that those replacement trees – especially in south east England, where landscapes are associated with ancient and dynamic woodland – will never



grow in the same way their predecessors did.

A growing grey squirrel population was suddenly noticed by estate staff at the Freechase Estate over 10 years ago, and a programme of control was put in place. Because of their quick actions, most of the young trees were saved, and this work continues. At the Lydhurst Estate, by contrast, ESI visitors were shown how grey squirrels attacked native species – especially oak, beech and sweet chestnut, and particularly at 20-40 years old – in the quest for food, particularly at certain times of the year. Their goal, as they dig into and erode the tree bark, is phloem, the living tissue that transports food and water from the roots as a vital part of photosynthesis. Without this essential life force, tree leaders are visibly shredded and the tree will ultimately die, spelling an end to the familiar and much-loved landscape with which the region is associated.

After a welcome by ESI chairman George Farr, squirrel expert Charles Dutton, senior forestry manager of Pryor & Rickett Silviculture, opened the seminar by demonstrating the financial as well as the physical cost of this grey



squirrel damage. He outlined the potential expenditure of replanting that had “gone down the pan” since the Great Storm, through planting grants, lost biodiversity and wasted timber. “How serious are we about planting trees?” he asked. “I believe we are in a golden age of silviculture, but it needs a cross-party political approach to produce guidelines and recommendations for tree growers. It is too costly a problem for landowners to try and manage themselves.”

Referring back to 1987, Graham Taylor, managing director of Pryor & Rickett Silviculture, told visitors that 1.25 million non-woodland trees and 13.75 million forest trees were lost to the Great Storm. He demonstrated the amount of time, effort and cost of regenerating and recovering the landscape over the intervening period. “People argue that they can’t justify the cost of grey squirrel control, but I would argue that if you want fine trees, and you want them to be worth something, you need to control grey squirrels.”

Alternative means of controlling squirrels were also discussed during the day, including local shoot groups, fertility control, alternative food sources, better traps (including Goodnature traps), pine martens and, most recently, a lure to make trapping more effective. More research on all these options was called for.

Public opinion, when aware of the relentless damage caused by grey squirrels to trees and woodland, is largely behind the work of ESI. The visit to Warninglid and to the Freechase and Lydhurst Estates served to reinforce the importance of ESI’s work by highlighting the damage caused to trees, which are vulnerable to squirrel damage until they are around 40 years old, and the threat to Britain’s future landscape and timber resource.

ESI is grateful of Pryor & Rickett Silviculture, Sir Adrian and Lady Baillie, and the Freechase and Lydhurst Estates for their support of this event.





Italy - Updates From The Life U-Savereds Project: Halfway To Success?

The LIFE+ Project - LIFE U-SAVEREDS was launched in 2014 to protect the native red squirrel and forest biodiversity in central Italy. Here, in 2015 the threat to conservation was represented by about 1500 grey squirrels, concentrated in urban parks and in several small private properties in the city of Perugia and its surroundings, for a total project area of about 50 km².

Grey squirrel removal started at the beginning of 2016. First, a large number of animals were captured in the core area of the grey squirrel range: in about 10 days, the project staff captured and euthanized about 300 animals in an area of 38 hectares.

This positive result was easily achieved, since the project staff were able to access most of the core area and to carry out capture activities on a regularly basis.

The second phase of the project involved a wider geographical area with more privately held land and the support of the local population was needed. Concerted attempts were made to gain the support of the local population. A 'door-to-door' campaign where project staff attempted to contact 566 landowners asking for permission to

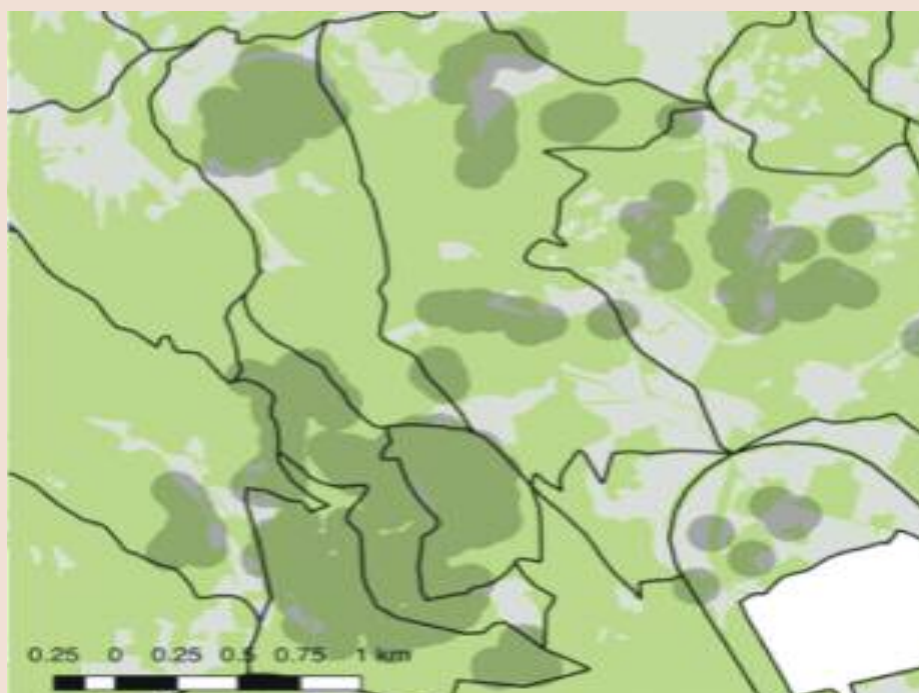
enter their properties was carried out. 253 responses were obtained, 103 of which were positive. Subsequently we contacted landowners on the phone, a further 7.4% agreed to collaborate in the project.

Due to the low levels of compliance from local landowners, the project could only continue sporadically. Additionally, in the spring and summer of 2017 local animal rights groups became active in the area of the project, damaging grey squirrel traps placed in public areas within the city of Perugia. They also targeted the information campaign which the project was running- vandalizing notice boards informing the general public about the threat posed by alien species.

Nevertheless, by the end of July 2017, 778 grey squirrels had been



removed (51.5% of the estimated 2015 population - 20 of these animals were captured, sterilized and released). Through concerted effort we managed to gain access to half of the outlined project area, though the accessible properties were irregularly distributed

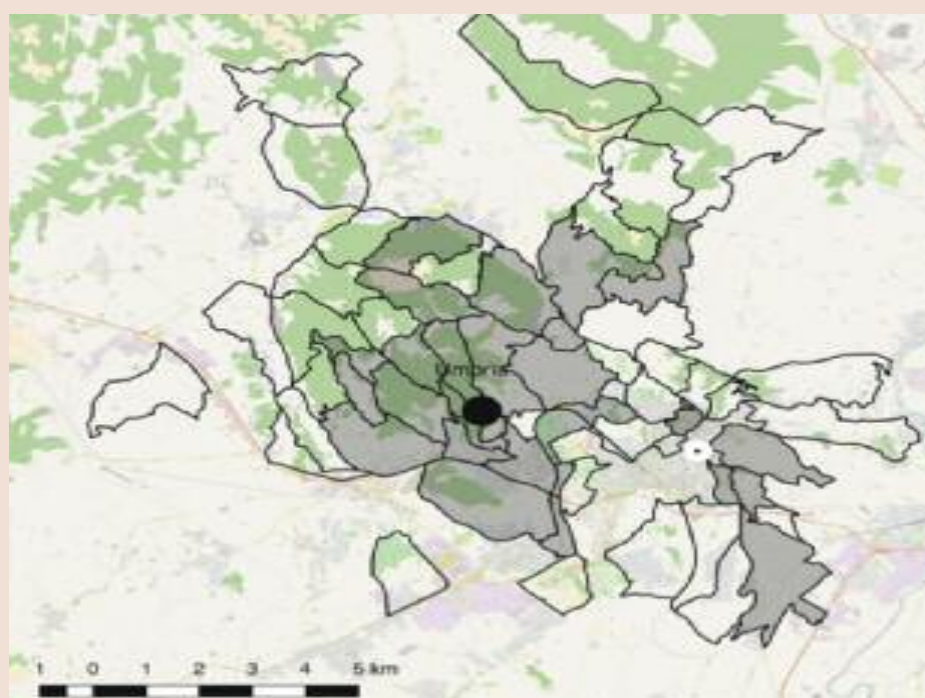


Management Units
Accessible & managed areas
Habitat suitability
unsuitable
suitable (forests and green areas)

Location of the Project area in Italy and map of Management Units, showing the grey squirrel distribution in 2015.

over an area of 26.5 km². In order to overcome this obstacle, we divided the project into management units. We analyzed the spatial distribution of those traps that we had detailed data on animal abundance for, it was possible to show the clear relationship between the proportion of animals removed and the percentage of accessible area. In some management units where collaboration with landowners was difficult we focused on the strategic positioning of traps. This proved successful and even in areas where we only had access to 64% of the land, we removed 80% of the grey squirrel population.

The results achieved so far confirm that the road to success is steep: door-to-door/phone campaigns are time-consuming and a large communication effort is required to convince and doubtful citizens and get their cooperation. Also, field data confirm that the area actually managed should not be less than a critical value of 75-80%. In the absence of active citizenship support, a strategic positioning of traps may allow to achieve good results, but, overall, the outcome of management remains strongly dependent on active citizen collaboration.



- Release site
- Perugia - city center
- Management Units
- Grey squirrel distribution (2015)

Detail of the Management Unit map, showing the suitable habitat for grey squirrel and the irregular distribution of the areas actually managed (dark grey). Depending on the Management Unit, the percentage of accessible land varies from 25 to about 80%.



Grey squirrels in western Canada

ESI's scientific advisor, Dr Craig Shuttlesworth, was awarded the 2017 Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship which gave him the opportunity to travel to Canada this year to look at the control of eastern grey and fox squirrels in Western Canada. As our readers will be aware Dr Shuttlesworth has been involved with ESI since its beginnings, he has published widely, including *Grey Squirrels, Ecology and Management of Invasive Species*, and has been instrumental in the clearance of the grey squirrel from Anglesey.

Grey squirrels were never meant to be in British Columbia (BC). They are a woodland species native to eastern Canada and should not be found in any woodland in western states. Intrigued by the potential impacts they might be having, I was lucky enough to spend six weeks in BC working alongside the indomitable Karl Larsen, a scientist who has spent more than a decade trying to get Government to prevent further grey squirrel range expansion.

Karl's research has shown that grey

squirrels will eat a broad spectrum of fruit and nuts, many of which are grown commercially in the Okanagan valley where grey squirrels are now well entrenched. Indeed they are already having some localised impact, mainly by consuming cobnuts. Individuals also occasionally enter roof and attic spaces where they cause damage to loft insulation and wiring. Currently the level of damage to commercial property and crops is quite low, however, it is well known that invasive species can persist

in a new environment for many years, sometimes decades, without any obvious detrimental impacts before suddenly causing severe problems. This may be due to changes in weather patterns, farming practices and or the arrival of other non-native species. In Canada this lesson has not been learned and instead the State focus is upon addressing those invasive weed species and aquatic alien species already known to be causing significant economic or ecological problems. The

grey squirrel may have a bad record in Europe but as long as the species behaves in western Canada, it is unfortunately easy for it to be quietly ignored.

So how can we change Government perspective? Any change is likely to come about largely through public pressure and a better understanding of the true impacts of grey squirrels. During my visit, Karl & I worked with local communities and documented a willingness for local people to get involved in grey squirrel control. There was no shortage of people willing to control greys to safeguard local biodiversity and no shortage of people willing to support any Government funded interventions to reduce grey squirrel distribution. People also voiced concerns about the pathogens that grey squirrels might carry, especially infections which might affect indigenous wildlife. There has been surprisingly little research in this area and so Karl & I harvested blood and tissues from 70 grey squirrels with a view to testing for squirrel pox virus, adenovirus and other zoonotic infections.

Later I visited First Nation bands, met fur trappers and spent time in northern research forests to understand how grey squirrel incursion may be detected in vast forest landscapes and to investigate whether forest structure and species composition might be effective barriers to continued successful range expansion. Grey squirrels are currently concentrated within broadleaved habitats in coastal and river valleys, and in urban and suburban habitats where many non-native hardwood tree species have been planted. Intriguingly, they do occupy coniferous old growth forest in Vancouver city and appear to have had little impact upon the Douglas squirrel there. In contrast, there is evidence at interface areas, that grey squirrel plunder red squirrel winter stores and may affect winter survival as a consequence.

A full report on Craig's visit to Canada will be available from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust as part of his 2017 Fellowship 'Nutkin ventured, nutkin gained: evolving grey squirrel management techniques.'



Slovenia

*by Chloe Darling,
a Randle Bursary recipient*

Slovenia is a very beautiful little country, below Austria and east of Italy and is 58% forested mostly on and around the wonderful mountains and hills. It is about the size of Wales but population is 2 m as opposed to 5.5 m and half the size of Switzerland.

My original attraction was to see the International Wildflower Festival held in Bohinj in May every year, but thought it would be good to understand the forestry while I was there. The Royal Forestry Society gave me a bursary to study the forestry and write a report which I have done with enthusiasm because it is just so wonderful; just so much of it and so well managed by the Slovenian Forestry Service. Two members of staff spared their friendship, time and knowledge with me for which I am truly grateful. There are over 800 staff in the Service and about 600 are involved in the forests. They have jurisdiction over every tree and mark millions every year to be felled. Timber is exported to Austria and Italy and a very important ingredient in the National economy.

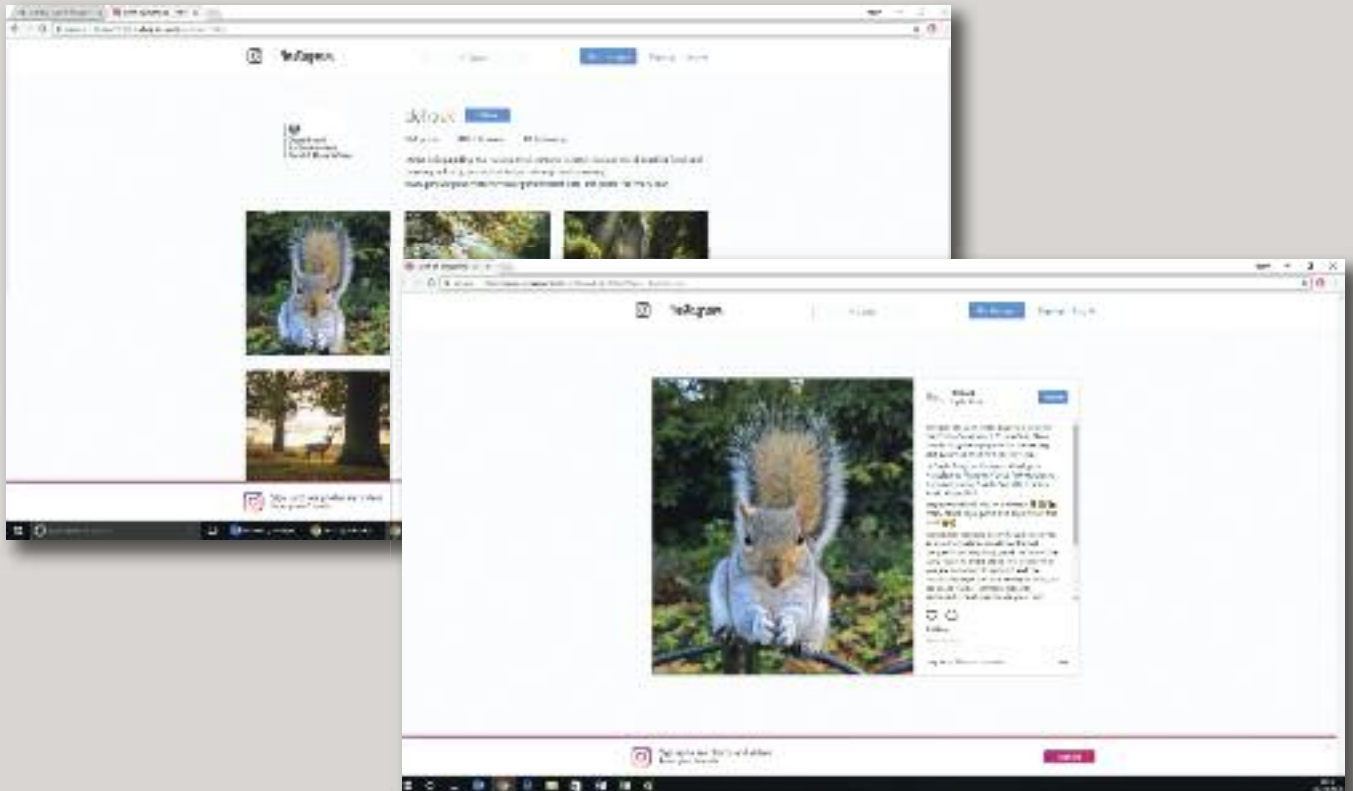
I did mention grey squirrels to my forestry mentors but they did not really understand the first time, so I asked ESI to contact one of them with information. Then last week I was there again with a MISSION to help keep *The Dreaded Greys Out* of Slovenian forests. Previously I had sent photos of stripped trees this August but that did not seem to penetrate either so I am going to try my utmost to convince the Slovenian Forestry Service to take the matter VERY seriously.

More news later.



What is DEFRA up to?!?

As these screen grabs from DEFRA's Instagram account show, it is worrying they are still promoting grey squirrels.



ESI Supports International Colloquium

ESI has agreed to help fund the attendance of postgraduate students wishing to attend the 8th International Colloquium on Squirrels which will take place at NUI Galway 4th to 8th June 2018. The colloquium, which takes place every three years, brings together squirrel researchers from around the world to discuss all aspects of squirrel biology including ecology, evolution, genetics and conservation. "We are delighted to be able to support this important event, particularly as it is being held at NUI Galway where ESI has already supported work being done into the interaction between squirrels and pine martens", George Farr ESI Chairman.



SQUIRREL

This is the 35th edition of The Squirrel, and here at ESI we are constantly looking at ways to improve our communication with our readers and supporters. In order to help improve communication with you all we will be producing an e-newsletter in addition to the printed magazine that you already enjoy. This will also allow us to communicate with our readers more regularly.

Please could you email info@europeansquirrelinitiative.org with your email details or complete the form below and send to:

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Forestry Funding Wasted Without Grey Squirrel Control

Grey squirrel control must be one of the conditions fulfilled by applicants wishing to apply for support under a new forestry funding programme announced by the government July.

In a press release issued at the time ESI stated, “while we welcome the government’s support for farmers and landowners in helping to create new woodlands, this must go hand in hand with proper management and this means effective grey squirrel control. If this does not happen then this project will fail and more taxpayers’ money will be wasted”.

“Already we have seen government funding into new woodland creation wasted due to lack of support for consistent and coordinated grey squirrel control. It has been estimated that grey squirrel damage and the consequential economic impact costs the UK forestry industry many tens of millions of pounds per annum and more woodland creation will add to this bill unless woodland protection conditions are attached to payments to ensure that the new woodland is established for the long term”.

The announcement, by forestry Minister, Therese Coffey, stated that farmers, foresters and land managers will be able to apply for up to £6800 per hectare to plant, weed and protect new woodland as part of the next round of the governments Woodland Creation grant. The fund, which is part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme amounts to £13m and aims to plant more than 3 million trees.

Grey squirrels are invasive aliens and recognised by government as a pest species. They are now classified by a recent EU Regulation as a species which governments have an obligation to control. Recent figures released by the EU show that non-native species cost the members states in excess of £12bn a year.

ESI went on to say, “there is no doubt that the government must honour its obligations and insist on grey squirrel control. Unless this happens, the trees

planted today will not grow to maturity tomorrow. In addition, timber quality will suffer together with detrimental impacts on our native flora and fauna. We cannot afford to throw money away and government has an opportunity to put measures in place to ensure that we have a healthy and vibrant forestry and woodland sector throughout the UK which will benefit the environment and wider biodiversity in the future”.

“2017 is the 30th anniversary of the Great Storm of 1987. We must take note of the fact that trees planted following that event are now at their most vulnerable to damage by grey squirrels. Huge government support was given to encourage new planting but with no requirement to control grey squirrels. Unfortunately, the results of this can now be seen, with no hope that this large-scale new planting will ever be able to match which it was designed to replace. We must learn from our mistakes”.



The Grey Squirrel Management Handbook

By Charles Dutton



The Grey Squirrel Ecology & Management of an Invasive Species in Europe

by Craig M. Shuttleworth

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The Grey Squirrel

Management Handbook

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+44 (0)2476 992360 or email us info@europeansquirrelinitiative.org

Slow-cooked Squirrel and Chorizo Stew

Ingredients:

2 squirrels
200g chorizo
2 cloves of garlic
250g butter beans
250g chopped tomatoes
½ Red onion
100ml water
2 tbsp Crushed chilli seeds
Tsp of smoked paprika
Salt and Pepper

Cut up the squirrels into five pieces, and brown off for no more than 1 minute with plenty of cooking oil in a hot frying pan. Take the pieces out the



pan and allow to rest. Roughly chop the onion and add it and the chorizo to the pan to brown for 5 minutes.

Place the squirrel, onion and chorizo into a suitable dish, adding the chopped tomatoes, water, smoked

paprika and garlic, and put into the oven (100°C) or slow cooker (low). Cook for five hours adding the butter beans and chilli seeds for the last hour.

Serve with some warm bread and butter.



Spatchcock BBQ Squirrel

Marinade:

2tbsp Maple syrup
2 crushed cloves of Garlic
1 tbsp whole grain Mustard
3 sprigs of Rosemary
Dash of olive oil
Salt and Pepper

To spatchcock the squirrel cut using a pair of scissors up along the rib cage to the neck, turn the squirrel over and squash with the palm of your hand so the squirrel lies flat. Mix all the marinade together and rub into the squirrel. Place in the fridge for a minimum 12 hours.

Light the BBQ and leave to gain full heat, cook the squirrel for 5 minutes on each side and allow 5 minutes to rest.



The Tactical Art of Giving to Maximum Tax Efficient Effect

We are often invited to make a charitable bequest in support of our favourite charities in our Wills. That is attractive to us as it can be a large lump of money we no longer need following our death and it attracts Inheritance Tax relief – who doesn't like some tax relief?

We are often invited to make a charitable bequest in support of our favourite charities in our Wills. That is attractive to us as it can be a large lump of money we no longer need following our death and it attracts Inheritance Tax relief – who doesn't like some tax relief?

The Government supports this giving on death by not only granting IHT relief on small gifts but also by cutting the standard rate of Inheritance Tax to 36% if 10% or more of a taxable estate is left to charity.

Not everyone suffers Inheritance Tax which may be why we hear more about making donations to our favourite charities using "Gift Aid". Donations using Gift Aid have the benefit of securing more money for the charity through income tax relief for all UK income tax payers, with further income tax relief given to higher rate taxpayers.

Both methods of giving are well recognised and understood. However, we are rarely invited to think about making a lifetime gift to our favourite charities of the amount presently recorded in our Will.

"Why do that? I hear you ask?"

Much more tax relief is my simple answer.

Imagine you were leaving £10,000 in your Will to the European Squirrel Initiative. On your eventual death, which may be years away, such a gift would be paid to the charity after probate is

granted on your estate, which would be after your executors have settled your Inheritance Tax liability. That bill will have been reduced by £4,000 because of the £10,000 charitable bequest you have made.

Now imagine you could see in your lifetime the benefits of the European Squirrel Initiative receiving your £10,000 bequest today rather than years in the future when you die.

If you were to pay out £8,000 today and complete the Gift Aid form, the charity will collect 25% (£2,000) from HMRC and thus it receives that £10,000 for its immediate projects. If you are a higher rate payer you will get the further income tax relief at 20% or 25% of your donation.

Having made this gift to a charity in your lifetime and having received income tax relief, your remaining estate is now that much smaller and, were you to die, your executors have the immediate benefit of a reduced IHT bill on that smaller estate.

You will have obtained much more tax relief than you were expecting by merely leaving a charitable bequest in your Will.

"..but cash flow is an issue in my lifetime" I hear you say "Once I am gone I am not worried about cash flow."

That is fair enough so then I ask if you are one of many fortunate enough to have some listed shares sitting there

producing a steady 2% per annum (on which you may be paying your higher rates of income tax) with the share value massively more than the original price?

You don't sell because you would have to pay 20% Capital Gains Tax on the profit but did you know that if you gave £10,000 worth of shares to ESI you could get income tax relief at up to your highest rate on that £10,000 share gift?

So, on shares worth £10,000 earning you a taxable £200 per annum you could cut your income tax bill by £2,000, £4,000 or, perhaps, £4,500 depending on your top tax rate and, guess what? There is NO Capital Gains Tax to pay on such a gift. Also, once gifted, your estate is £10,000 smaller so your executors get an eventual Inheritance Tax reduction as well.

There should always be a good reason to wait until you die before giving material support to your favourite charities through a bequest in your Will.

May I suggest it can be much more personally rewarding to pay over your "bequest" in your lifetime so you can see your gift being put to work on the projects close to your heart. Your executors may not be looking as closely as you will.

A lifetime "bequest" can be made in a way that is even more tax efficient than just getting Inheritance Tax Relief.

Of course, you should get professional advice before making any material gift to charity.

EUROPEAN SQUIRREL INITIATIVE CHRISTMAS CARD



www.europeansquirrelinitiative.org

Reg Charity: England and Wales: 1105920 Scotland: SCO39806

ORDER

Number of packs _____ £3.50 per pack (of 10) = £ _____

Plus Postage & Packaging (see below) £ _____

I enclose a cheque for £ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Post code _____

Email: _____

Please make your cheque payable to:

European Squirrel Initiative and post it with this form to: **26 Rural Innovation Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG.**

(Your cards will be despatched within seven days)



If you have any queries about your order you can call us on

+44 (0)2476 992360 or

email us at info@europeansquirrelinitiative.org

The cards are available in packs of 10 and cost £3.50 per pack plus postage and packaging. Card size 171mm x 121mm

Postage and packing: 1-3 packs - add £2.79 4-6 packs - add £3.35
7-9 packs - add £3.95 10+ packs - add £5.75

Make a Donation

giftaid it

☐ I enclose a cheque donation for £ _____ payable to European Squirrel Initiative

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made (tick all boxes that you wish to apply)

☐ today ☐ in the past 4 years ☐ in the future

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Please notify the charity if you: Want to cancel this declaration. Change your name or home address. No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains tax. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask your local tax office for leaflet IR65.

Title: _____ Forename(s): _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

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Email Address: _____ Telephone: _____

☐ Please add me to the mailing list. I would like to receive future copies of Squirrel free of charge **by email / by post.**

(Delete as necessary, email being the least expensive method of distribution for the charity)

Once completed please return to: 26 Rural Innovation Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG.

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