

Press release

NEW CHAIRMAN APPOINTED FOR LEADING SQUIRREL CONSERVATION CHARITY

3rd September 2015

The European Squirrel Initiative (ESI) has appointed Andy Wiseman as their new Chairman. Mr Wiseman, a professional chartered forester with over 20 years' experience of red squirrel conservation management, took over on the 1st September from George Farr who has been Chairman for the last four years.

ESI, founded in 2002, is dedicated to eradicating the damaging effects of the invasive American grey squirrel and conservation of the native red squirrel.

"I am honoured to have been appointed Chairman of ESI. It is a great privilege to be leading such a worthwhile and effective charity which is fighting a cause so dear to my heart," said Mr Wiseman.

Andy Wiseman has over 30 years' experience of grey squirrel control around the UK. He is the former chair of the Borders Squirrel Management Group, currently chairs the Red Squirrels in South Scotland advisory group and sits on the steering group of the national Saving Scotland's Red Squirrel project. He works as a Woodland Advisor for Buccleuch, who are founder members of ESI, and has been a trustee and a member of the management committee since the charity's creation.

From its beginning ESI has helped to shape government policy on the control of grey squirrels; has been active in developing the position of the European Commission on invasive alien species; and been involved with the Italian authorities in developing a programme for grey squirrel control in Italy.

"I am proud to be the Chairman of ESI and thank the former Chairman and fellow trustees for their support. This is a busy time for ESI and we have several issues on the horizon that require our attention. We need to challenge certain policy and dogma whilst supporting those who battle the grey squirrel to grow sustainable forests and to save our native red squirrel. We need to continue our research work on new and innovative methods of controlling the grey squirrel and I thank my predecessor, George Farr, for his hard work and commitment to the cause over the last four years," said Mr Wiseman.

Part of ESI's remit is to educate and inform the public and, during the period since its creation, surveys conducted by ESI have shown a significant increase in awareness of the threat caused by grey squirrels to the native red squirrel and the growing realisation that the control of the greys is the most effective way of preserving the future of the native red and securing our broadleaved forests.

Ends

Notes to editor:



High-resolution photo available to accompany this release.

The European Squirrel Initiative:

The grey squirrel, *Sciurus carolinensis*, a native species of North America, was introduced to England from the late 19th century, until 1938 when it became illegal to import or keep the species in captivity.

The European Squirrel Initiative was founded in June 2002 by a group of concerned conservationists and foresters. The organisation seeks the restoration of the native red squirrel and the protection of the natural environment by removing the impact of the alien grey squirrel in Europe.

Its role is to:

- Persuade conservation bodies and governments of the absolute necessity of ridding Europe of the grey squirrel.
- Continue to commission research into the impact of the grey squirrel on

local ecosystems. For more information visit the ESI website:

www.europeansquirrelinitiative.org

Issued by Kendalls on behalf of the European Squirrel Initiative.

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