



<b>Title</b>	<b>North East Eradication Officer</b> <i>Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels – Transforming Nature Project</i>
<b>Part-time or Full-time</b>	<b>Full time (35 hours/week); Fixed-term until 31 March 2026</b>
<b>Office Location</b>	Inverdee House, Torry, with anticipated flexible working throughout Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire
<b>Dept/Region</b>	Conservation
<b>Reporting to</b>	<i>Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels North East Eradication Scientific Lead</i>

## Our Mission

For nearly 60 years, the Scottish Wildlife Trust has worked with its members, partners and supporters in pursuit of its vision of healthy, resilient ecosystems across Scotland's land and seas. The Trust successfully champions the cause of wildlife through policy and campaigning work, demonstrates best practice through practical conservation and innovative partnerships, and inspires people to take action through its education and engagement activities. It also manages a network of over 100 wildlife reserves across Scotland and is a member of the UK-wide Wildlife Trusts movement.

## Our Values

- We are pioneers
- We are always learning
- We act with integrity
- We are evidence-based
- We are impact focused
- We are collaborative

## Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels

*Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels* (SSRS) is a project to deliver the essential protection measures required to secure the long-term future of red squirrels in Scotland and to ensure that systems are put in place to continue the delivery of these measures over the long term by working with other agencies with a stake in native species conservation and invasive non-native species management.

SSRS focuses upon one of our most charismatic and well-loved mammals – the red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*). Once widespread, red squirrels have undergone a catastrophic population decline primarily due to the spread of the invasive non-native, American grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), introduced to the UK from North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to their larger size, feeding habits, and ability to live at higher densities, grey squirrels outcompete reds for food and living space, making it difficult for red squirrels to successfully breed and for their young to survive. They can also carry the squirrelpox virus which does not harm them but is deadly to reds. Since their arrival greys have displaced red squirrels in most of England, Wales, and Scotland's Central Belt, and without preventative measures would continue to do so in further areas of the country. Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) was formed to reverse this decline and create the conditions for this mammal to thrive in future.

## *Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels*

### **North East Eradication Officer**

#### **Overall Purpose of the Role**

The North East Eradication Officer will contribute to the implementation of a programme of targeted grey squirrel monitoring and control aimed at eradication of grey squirrels in Aberdeen, in accordance with the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels project plan.

Primary responsibilities include the recruitment, training and support of landowners, partners, and volunteers to conduct rapid response monitoring and the delivery of innovative methods to systematically detect and remove grey squirrels in Aberdeen.

#### **Main Tasks**

Work systematically and adaptively to reduce the abundance and spread of grey squirrels in Aberdeen working towards eradication, using innovative methods to improve squirrel detection and trapping performance as grey squirrels become scarce.

##### *Grey Squirrel Control*

1. Work closely with the NE Eradication Scientific Lead and other NE team members to develop and deploy novel grey squirrel removal methods necessary to achieve eradication.
2. Carry out grey squirrel control to ensure coverage of risk areas according to the SSRS project's Standard Operating Procedures, including use of feeder-box, Mink Police and camera-trap monitoring to monitor squirrel presence.
3. Organise land access permission for grey squirrel control work from landowners and managers (public and private), including obtaining written permissions and secure their continued cooperation.
4. Ensure the continued cooperation of landowners and managers in order to carry out efficient red squirrel conservation work, building contact networks throughout the geographical area.
5. Encourage land managers and householders to carry out their own grey squirrel control and provide appropriate individual training and equipment under a trap-loan scheme. Provide a despatch service for grey squirrels trapped under the scheme.
6. Liaise closely with the other SSRS NE team members to ensure coordinated working across the urban and rural landscapes.
7. Work in accordance with risk assessments for all outdoor work and comply with SWT's lone working policy for personal and third-party safety.

##### *Surveying and Monitoring*

8. Carry out feeder box surveys of Aberdeen City and Shire as part of the NE Team's Rapid Response Monitoring (RRM), including data entry and liaising with NE Team members and volunteers.
9. Train and support volunteers and local stakeholders to conduct routine monitoring as part of the rapid response scheme and respond to grey squirrel detections by trapping.
10. Work closely with the NE Eradication Scientific Lead and other NE team members to develop and deploy novel grey squirrel detection methods necessary to achieve eradication and resolve issues of trap shy grey squirrels and red squirrels trap blocking around the city.
11. Where necessary, support the Student Monitoring Officer with the annual surveys.
12. Work closely with the NE Eradication Scientific Lead and other NE team members to implement a programme of responsive grey squirrel presence surveying via detection dog and develop a programme for later systematic surveying once a point of zero grey squirrel detections has been reached.

13. Collect records of red and grey squirrel sightings in the area to detect any changes to species distribution and to monitor the effectiveness of the removal programme.

#### *Reporting*

14. Collect and maintain high-quality, accurate records on monitoring and trapping efforts using Excel and the SSRS Hub (database) to agreed SSRS project standards and submit accurate records and timesheets monthly, including records of householder and volunteer participation and trapping records.
15. Support efforts to collect necessary grey squirrel hair and tissue samples for analysis by RZSS WildGenes Lab.
16. Record sightings of red and grey squirrels in the area via the SSRS website.

#### *Community Engagement*

17. Work with the Northeast Community Outreach Officer to provide appropriate training to volunteers and external partners in relevant grey squirrel monitoring and detection methods to institutionalise expertise for post-eradication monitoring.
18. Encourage interest in local red squirrel conservation with relevant local communities and encourage recording and reporting of squirrel sightings via the Community Hub.
19. Distribute posters and leaflets in relevant/key places in order to encourage the reporting of squirrel sightings.
20. Assist the Northeast Community Outreach Officer and Eradication Lead in responding to enquiries from the public regarding grey squirrel control for red squirrel conservation.

#### **Key Contacts**

- SSRS Project staff, namely SSRS North East Eradication Scientific Lead and Community Outreach Officer, SSRS Programme Manager, SSRS Data Officer, SSRS Communications Officer,
- SSRS partners and stakeholders such as RZSS WildGenes Lab, Forestry and Land Scotland, Aberdeen City Council
- SSRS volunteers, landowners / managers, rangers, foresters and woodland managers, gamekeepers, and, householders

#### **Qualifications, Experience (essential/desirable)**

##### *Essential Qualifications (or matched experience):*

- SVQ/NVQ level 2 or equivalent in biology, ecology, or wildlife related discipline

##### *Essential Experience:*

- Minimum two years previous experience in a relevant field and proven experience of wildlife ecology and conservation, especially mammal population management or invasive non-native mammal control or eradication. Demonstrated proficiency in scientific reasoning and critical thinking, with experience following the scientific method.
- Experience of working successfully with landowners and members of the public.
- Experience in training or supervising volunteers and other members of staff.
- Proven experience of keeping accurate and comprehensive data records.
- Proven experience following detailed protocols accurately and reliably with minimal supervision.
- Prior experience of lone working.

##### *Essential Competencies / Qualities*

- A strong work ethic and proven reliability are essential.
- Motivation to complete eradication despite extremely low capture rates
- Willingness to learn new skills and operating methods; openness to a variety of humane dispatch methods in line with SSRS Standard Operating Procedures for Grey Squirrel Control, both for own use and to train others.

- Ability to troubleshoot and adapt experimental methods and protocols.
- Ability to work in woodland sites safely and discreetly, some of which are remote (the majority of the work will be lone working).
- Good understanding of conservation principles, practices and legislation.
- Confidence to deliver workshops and group or individual training sessions if required.

*Desirable Experience/ Knowledge:*

- Degree in biology, ecology, countryside management or related discipline with relevant experience of invasive/non-native mammal control.
- Experience of standardised surveys and understanding of scientific method.
- Tree climbing certification, or ability and willingness to apply for one with support
- Current air-weapon license, or ability and willingness to apply for one with support, for humane despatch.
- Familiarity with Aberdeenshire.
- Knowledge of forest and native tree species

Key competencies	Essential	Desirable
Technology and knowledge (IT)	Competent and experienced with the range of Microsoft Office applications (Excel, Outlook, Word, Teams).  Competent in using online reporting platforms to record standard data and able to enter data accurately.	Awareness and knowledge of General Data Protection Regulations.
Organisation and planning	Self-motivated, energetic and enthusiastic with excellent organisation; ability to manage own time schedule and responsibilities independently.	Strategic thinking with strong problem-solving skills, and motivated to take initiative
Communication (writing/spoken)	Excellent communication skills (both written and verbal); comfortable talking to a wide range of people including stakeholders, landowners, householders, volunteers, and the wider public.	
Commitment to organisational culture, values and vision		A strong personal commitment to wildlife conservation
Physical Fitness	Ability to work long hours in remote woodland sites often with challenging accessibility	

Additional Requirements	Essential	Desirable	Not applicable
Right to work in the UK	X		
Full Driving Licence	X		
Willingness to work occasional evenings and provide on call support at least one weekend per month	X		
Protection of Vulnerable Groups membership			X
First Aid Certificate		X	

<b>Author</b>	Nicole Still	<b>Position</b>	SSRS Programme Manager	<b>Date</b>	April 2024
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*Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels is a partnership project led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and supported by project partners and by the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot.*