

Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Grey Squirrel Control

Date published: 11 December, 2024

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

Table of Contents

[Aim](#)

[Grant support](#)

[Application eligibility criteria](#)

[Supporting information](#)

[Scoring criteria](#)

[How to claim](#)

[Technical guidance](#)

[Previous versions](#)

[Download guidance](#)

Aim

The aim of this option is to support the targeted control of grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) in areas where they are a threat to red squirrel (*S. vulgaris*) populations.

Grant support

This is an annual recurrent grant to support the labour costs for effective grey squirrel control. This includes the setting and monitoring of traps, the humane dispatch of live animals and the completion of cull returns.

The grant rate is £200 per trap per annum for up to a maximum of five years.

You may wish to apply for capital item options to encourage appropriate habitat management for red squirrels in stronghold areas and other priority areas identified in the revised [Scottish Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation](#).

[Woodland Improvement Grant – Habitats and Species](#)

[Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration](#)

Application eligibility criteria

Before applying for this option, you should check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding using the link below.

[Sustainable Management of Forests](#)

To apply for this option, you must have an approved Forest Plan for woodland areas of 100 hectares or more, unless in exceptional circumstances a Management Plan is deemed suitable.

For woodland areas less than 100 hectares you must have an approved Management Plan or Forest Plan.

In woodland where there is no other forest operational activity the requirement for a Forest Plan will be waived and an approved management plan will be sufficient.

Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance

Management Plan

Please see the 'Supporting information' section below for the information you need to supply us when applying for this option. You must use the appropriate standard template to give this information.

Your application must be in one of the areas identified on the 'Indicative strategic priorities for red squirrel conservation' map, or north of the Highland red squirrel protection line, as detailed in the revised Scottish Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation.



[Indicative strategic priorities for red squirrel conservation \(PDF, Size: 3.4 MB\)](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Indicative-strategic-priorities-for-red-squirrel-conservation.pdf)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Indicative-strategic-priorities-for-red-squirrel-conservation.pdf>

You must have grey squirrels on your land and this must be confirmed by the local red squirrel project officer.

All of your proposed work must comply with the [UK Forestry Standard](#) .

Other eligibility criteria

The number of traps and trapping sessions should be proportionate to the grey squirrel population and must be agreed with the local red squirrel project officer.

It should be based on both the estimated grey squirrel population in the area and previous trapping returns, to avoid over-deployment of traps.

You must trap for a minimum of 50 days per year.

This can be achieved through a combination of trapping sessions and days per session. For example, five trapping sessions of 10 days each.

Combinations can vary but you must record the number of days per trapping session throughout the year. It is recommended that trapping be completed between March and November.

A trapping session does not include the time for pre-baiting, however, pre-baiting must be undertaken at all sites to be trapped, to ensure effective control. You must kill any grey squirrels captured in the traps humanely and without delay.

You must not use live multi-capture traps where red squirrels are present. When you set traps for grey squirrels there is a legal requirement to check them for animals at least once a day.

You must also comply with the guidance set out in:

- [Controlling grey squirrels forests and woodlands uk](#)
- [Forestry Commission Practice Note 5 – Red Squirrel Conservation](#)
- the survey methods set out in the [Practical Techniques for Surveying and Monitoring Squirrels](#)
- applicants within a red squirrel stronghold must also comply with the guidance set out in [Forestry Commission Scotland Practice Note 102 – Managing Forests as Red Squirrel Strongholds](#)

It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) to release grey squirrels into the wild.

In some areas, trapped grey squirrels may need to be tested for the squirrel pox virus (SQPV). The Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels project will advise you at the time of application if this applies.

Supporting information

We need supporting information to help us assess your application. Please provide the details listed below using the template provided.



[Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Grey Squirrel Control supporting information template \(MS Word, Size: 773.1 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/0052---smf-sc-grey-squirrel-control-template---SF.doc>

You must:

- give trapping evidence of the presence of grey squirrels on your land and information about the estimated risk to resident red squirrels
- provide a description of how your application provides a collaborative and sustainable approach to maintaining red squirrel populations of strategic importance
- provide a work programme which contains the following information:
 - the number of traps being deployed
 - the location of each trap and an indication of when trapping will take place*
 - details about any proposed collaboration with neighbouring owners
- provide a statement from your local red squirrel project officer confirming the presence of grey squirrels on your land and supporting the number of traps you are proposing to use
- provide a map that shows the perimeter of the Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Grey Squirrel Control boundary

**Trapping in small areas of nearby woodland in non-woodland LPIDs is permitted where this will aid effective grey squirrel control*



[Example map – Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Grey Squirrel Control \(PDF, Size: 1.1 MB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/FGS-SMF-SpCon-Grey-Squirrel-Control.pdf>

[General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme](#)

Scoring criteria

We have set agreed financial budgets for each of the options under the Forestry Grant Scheme.

To ensure that we make the most cost-effective use of funding available and to meet Scottish Government objectives, we will assess each application using scoring criteria.

The criteria will be written as appropriate to each Forestry Grant Scheme option; please refer to [Scoring criteria and clearing process](#) for details.

Each option within your application must meet the threshold score to be considered for approval. In achieving the threshold score, your option must score against each criterion except for additional benefit.

The scores will then be used as the basis for allocating funding on a competitive basis through the Forestry Grant Scheme clearing process.

Delivery of benefits

1 POINT – for applications that meet the eligibility requirements but do not deliver any of the benefits detailed below.

3 POINTS – for applications that provide one or more of the following in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements:

- applications that clearly demonstrate that you are working in collaboration with neighbouring landholdings to control grey squirrel. Your forest/management plan must clearly demonstrate how you are working with neighbouring landholdings towards this outcome

5 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the three-point criteria above and the criteria below:

- applications which are clearly contributing to halting the spread of grey squirrels north of the 'Indicative grey control zone – Highland red squirrel protection line', as identified in the revised Scottish Red Squirrel Strategy. You must liaise with a Saving Scotland's Red Squirrel project officer or local red squirrel project officer to confirm that your application meets this requirement

Or

- applications that are in the 'Stronghold forests – priorities for managing habitat' area or the 'indicative priority grey control zones' as identified in the revised Scottish Red Squirrel strategy

Supplementary point – additional benefit

1 POINT – will be awarded, as an additional point, where:

- applications are on land where squirrels have been found in the last two years with the confirmed squirrel pox virus

Or

- applications that clearly identify red squirrel conservation as an objective in the Long Term Forest Plan or Management Plan and undertake supportive silvicultural actions. The plan should detail the specific habitat work proposed to improve the habitat for red squirrel (for example, by retaining or perpetuating mature mixed conifers, especially stands of mature Norway spruce)

How to claim

We will pay grants for up to five years for each year that your contract is covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan. If your Forest Plan or Management Plan expires during the five years of your contract you must ensure that it is renewed in time to be able to continue making annual claims. We cannot pay your claim for any claim year that is not covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan.

You must claim this grant on your Single Application Form.

You must submit evidence each year to enable payment, including the:

- 1:10,000 map showing the area that has been controlled
- trapping dates
- numbers of grey squirrels caught (a monitoring form is provided to help you to record your management)

You must also record details (date and location) of sightings as evidence of the continued presence of grey squirrels within the funded area.

You must **submit your annual monitoring form** to your local Scottish Forestry office once completed. The annual monitoring runs from 1 January to 31 December in each of the annual management claim years in your contract. The form can be submitted to Scottish Forestry **between 1 December** (of the annual management claim year) **and 14 March of the following year**. Please note that if we do not receive your annual monitoring form within this period of time you will miss payment for that annual management claim year. Inspections will be made against the contract map and your monitoring forms.



[Grey Squirrel Control – Monitoring Form \(MS Word, Size: 2.2 MB\)](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/0050---smf-grey-squirrel-control-monitoring-form---SF.doc)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/0050---smf-grey-squirrel-control-monitoring-form---SF.doc>

Please be aware that this data will be shared with the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels project, to allow detailed analysis of collective control effort and the benefits to red squirrels.

Technical guidance

- [Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance](#)
- [Management Plan](#)
- [General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme](#)
- [Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels \(SSRS\)](#)

- [Scottish Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation](#)
- [Scottish Forestry - Conserving Scotland's red squirrels](#)
- [NatureScot - Red squirrel information](#)

[Previous versions](#)

[Previous versions of this page](#)

[Download guidance](#)

Click 'Download this page' to create a printable version of this guidance you can save or print out.